OCTOBER 1988

COMMODORE USER

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No1 For AMIGA GAMES

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ONE-NIL!
MICROSOCCER
FIRST REVIEW

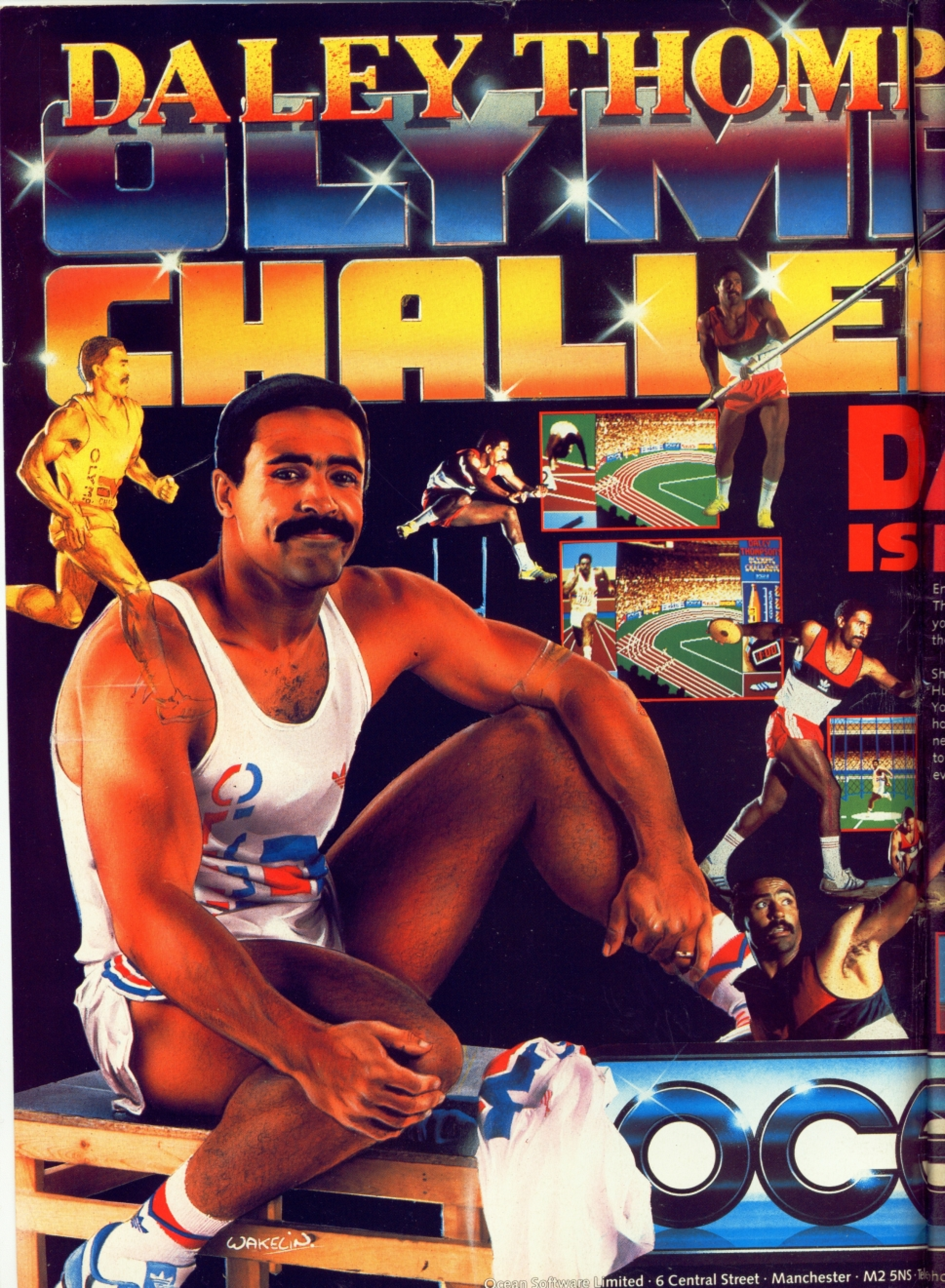
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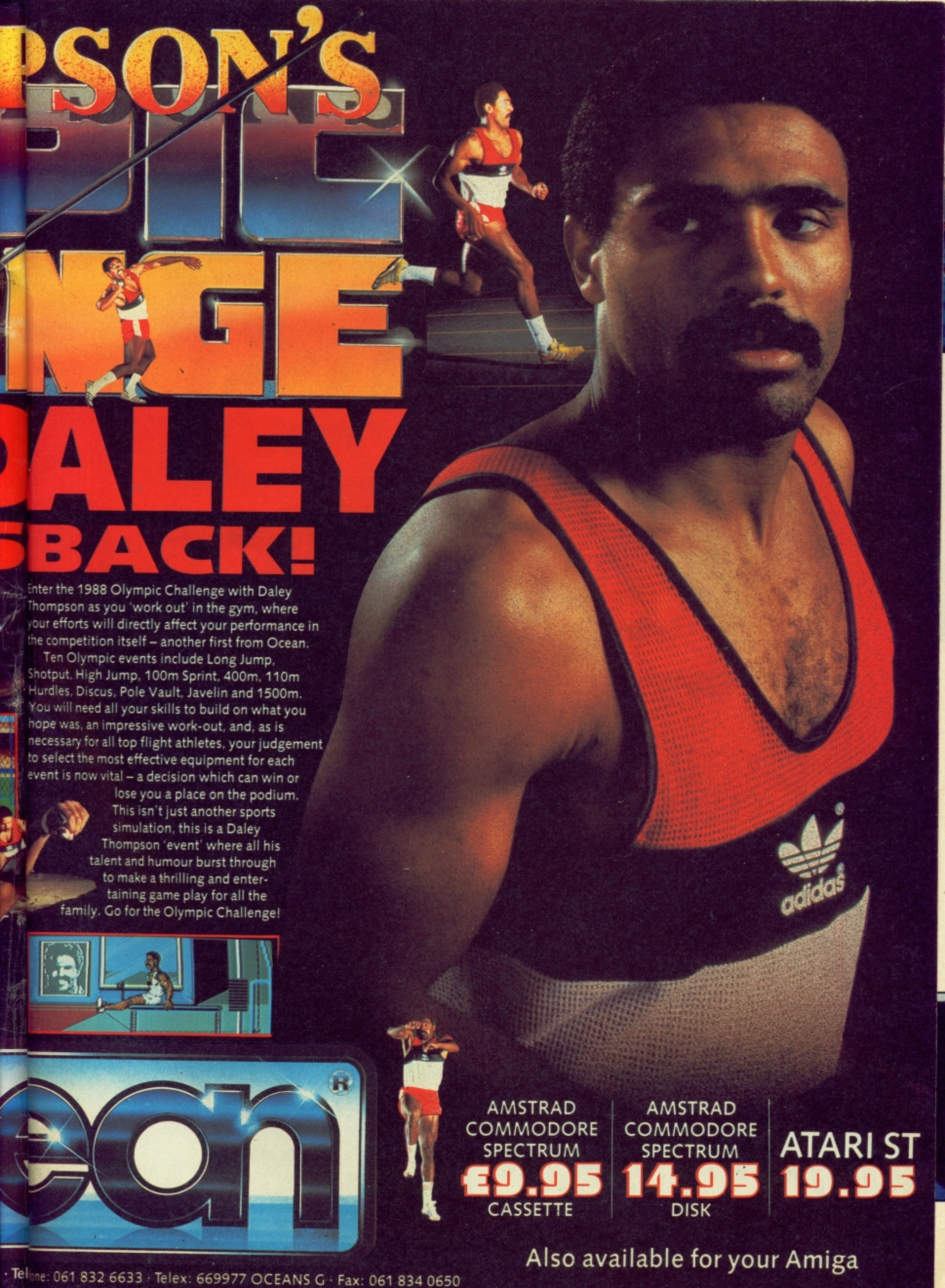
64 ARMALYTE
RED STORM RISING
POOLS OF RADIANCE

AMIGA VIRUS
ROCKET RANGER
ZYNAPS

AFTERBURNER
EXCLUSIVE PREVIEW!

FREE PULL OUT POSTER


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IS
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PSON'S
NGE
ALEY
BACK!
Enter the 1988 Olympic Challenge with Daley Thompson as you 'work out' in the gym, where your efforts will directly affect your performance in the competition itself – another first from Ocean.
Ten Olympic events include Long Jump, Shotput, High Jump, 100m Sprint, 400m, 110m Hurdles, Discus, Pole Vault, Javelin and 1500m. You will need all your skills to build on what you hope was, an impressive work-out, and, as is necessary for all top flight athletes, your judgement to select the most effective equipment for each event is now vital – a decision which can win or lose you a place on the podium.
This isn't just another sports simulation, this is a Daley Thompson 'event' where all his talent and humour burst through to make a thrilling and entertaining game play for all the family. Go for the Olympic Challenge!
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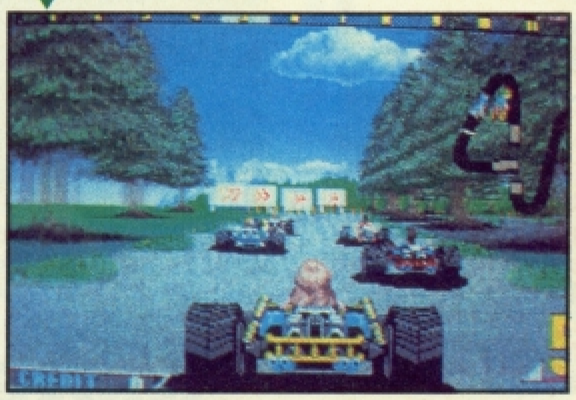


SPECIALS

Rocket Ranger — a Superstar!



Power Drift in the arcades.





Microsoccer

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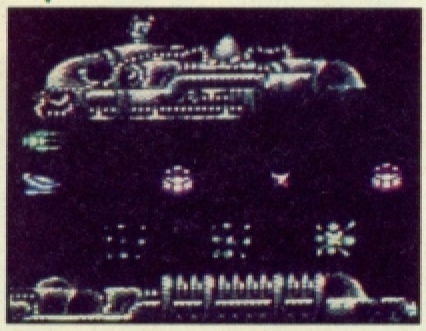
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Jan-June 1988

REVIEWS

Off Shore Warrior



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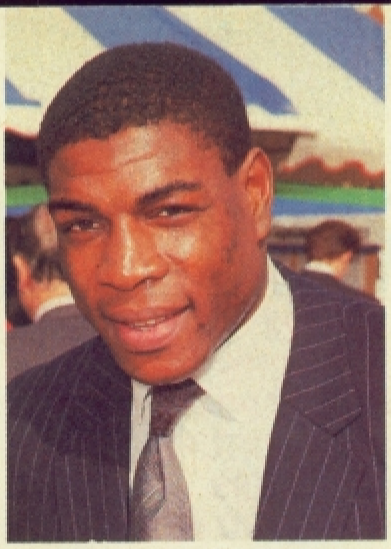




Virus — another Superstar!!!

BUZZ

LINEL'S CHAMP



What with Mike Tyson pulling out of the long-awaited showdown on doctor's orders, poor ol' Frank Bruno must be feeling a bit peeved just now. Never mind, Frank, you'll soon be able to try your hand at *The Champ* from Linel, a boxing game so realistic that it's been endorsed by the World Boxing Council. Available in time for Christmas on the Amiga, with a 64 version to follow in due course, *The Champ* follows the progress of a young fighter from street brawls, through rigorous training and sparring to world title fights. Well, no, you won't stand to make millions of pounds out of this game even if you lose, Frank. But then again, it's unlikely to damage your delicate features.

THE GHOSTS RETURN



Just a mere three or so years since its much-lauded arcade debut, *Ghosts 'n' Goblins* is all set for a sequel. Early 1989 will see *Ghost 'n' Goblins II's* appearance in the arcades, and from early reports it's going to be a big 'un. The scenario hasn't changed much from the original, but the graphics are improved almost beyond recognition with the likes of haunted forests, crumbling mansions and burning windmills being beautifully represented. Don't believe us? Well, just take a gander at this exclusive preview screenshot. And, what's more, by virtue of Capcom's ongoing tie-up with US Gold, *G&GII* should be appearing on the home market in all its spooky splendour by next summer.

MIKE READ ON YOUR 64

Fans of Cliff Richard lookalike Mike Read may be interested to know that the Radio 1 DJ and TV quiz show presenter will shortly be hosting his very own computer game. Elite have just signed up the licence to produce a game based on our Mike's popular TV show, 'Pop Quiz'. The resultant program is due out in November and will be called, with startling originality, *Mike Read's Computer Pop Quiz*.

KATAKIS CANNED

Mediagenic have taken legal action against US Gold to prevent publication of a game that they consider infringes the copyright of their much-publicised forthcoming conversion of *R-Type*. The offending game is US Gold's *Katakis*, reviewed in CU last month. The game was about two weeks from release when Mediagenic lawyers slapped an injunction on it. Following this, according to a Mediagenic spokesperson, US Gold "put up their hands and admitted that it was a fair cop". US Gold have now withdrawn *Katakis*.

Meanwhile, despite much sabre-rattling, it now seems certain that Mediagenic will definitely not be taking any legal action against Telecomsoft in respect of *Io*, another game which seemed to some to be 'heavily influenced' by the hit Irem coin-op. "After due examination", explained the spokesperson, "the similarities weren't quite as great as they had originally seemed."



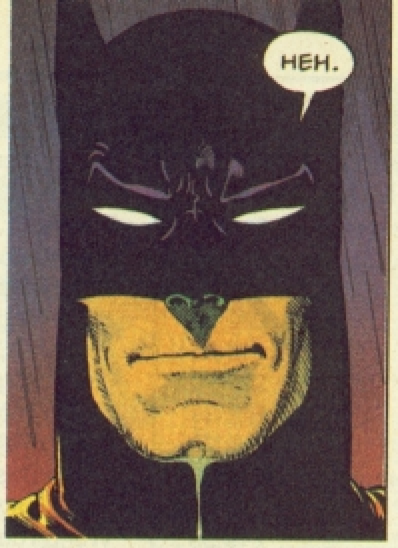
WHO'LL SIGN ROGER RABBIT?

As we write a furious battle of bids is being waged over the computer rights to what promises to be one of the biggest box office smashes ever. Already 'Who Framed Roger Rabbit' has grossed a whopping $131 million in America since it opened last June, and it promises to perform similarly when it opens here on December 2nd. Directed by Robert Zemeckis (previous successes include 'Back To The Future' and 'Romancing The Stone') and starring the brilliant Bob Hoskins plus a host of famous animated characters, 'Who Framed Roger Rabbit' introduces us to Toontown, an extraordinary suburb of Hollywood inhabited by all the famous cartoon heroes you've come to know and love over the years. Hoskins plays a down-at-luck human private investigator named Eddie Valiant who is hired by Roger Rabbit, a moderately successful contract cartoon character, to find out why and by whom Roger's being framed for a Toontown murder. During his investigations, Hoskins bumps into Bugs Bunny, Donald Duck, Betty Boop, Woody Woodpecker and just about every other cartoon star you've ever heard of. This mixture of real life and cartoon is made possible by some extraordinary new animation wizardry.

So confident are licence holders Walt Disney of the desirability of "Roger" that they've taken the unprecendented step of offering separate licence deals for different territories. And, even more startlingly, at least on the 64, the companies aren't bidding for conversion rights at all, but instead for an as-yet-unfinished game currently being programmed by a team specially commissioned by Disney! Despite these very substantial limitations on any potential softco's ability to develop and market a "Roger Rabbit" game profitably, there is understood to be no shortage of companies offering reputedly enormous sums of money for the rights. Mediagenic/Activision are already understood to have picked up the US rights. But who'll get Roger for the U.K.?

Watch this space.

HOLY SOFTWARE!



Ocean have just announced their plans to release a Batman game before Christmas. They re-signed the licence to the caped crusader after releasing games on the Speccy and Amstrad some two years ago. The game is being written by Special FX though details were scarce as we went to press.

We're chuffed to say this gives us a chance to run a little compoette giving away Frank Miller's definitive Batman graphic novel, 'The Dark Knight'. We've got six copies and all you have to do to win one is tell us what Bruce Wayne's butler is called. Answers on a pair of pixie boots to Batman Compo, Commodore User, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.

THE MUNSTERS AGAIN



A brand new softco have managed to secure the rights to that wondrously wacky 'n' camp '60s TV Show, The Munsters. A sister company of budget moguls Alternative, the strangely named Again Again will be bringing out their debut game for the Christmas market. The TV Show concerns the everyday existance of a family of werewolves, vampires and reconstructed corpses. Father Herman is a Frankenstein clone and mum Lilly is a vampirette, all of which has a disturbing effect on their offspring. Written by the blokes who gave you *Way Of The Tiger* and *Terramex, The Munsters* is due for a mid-November release on Amiga and 64. And the show's (re)running on C4 now.

REAPPEARANCE OF ROY

Those who mourned the disappearance earlier this year of Piranha Software, and thought that they'd never see the star of Melchester Rovers in action on their monitors need mourn no longer. For Gremlin stepped in to pick up the famous comic footie star licence when its original holders decided to opt out of the computer games market, and their conversion of *Roy Of The Rovers* is due out next month. No news yet, however, concerning Piranha's other two comic licences, *Halo Jones* and *Judge Death*, both of which are presumably still up for grabs.

F 16 READY FOR TAKE OFF



This month should see the launch of Digital Integration's latest flight sim, *F16 Combat Pilot*, based on one of the most advanced multi-role fighters currently used by the USAF. Dog-fighting, battle support and intelligence gathering are among the different missions you'll be able to undertake in what Dig Int promise is an exceptionally accurate simulation of "the most challenging and exciting aircraft to fly in the world". Well, any day now, you can make up your own minds.



OCEAN UNTOUCHED

Remember way back last November ish we mentioned in these hallowed pages that Ocean Software looked like they might shortly be shelling out for the conversion rights to the groovey 1930's gangster movie *The Untouchables?* Well, it took a bit longer than originally anticipated, but we are now eventually able to confirm, in true you-read-it-here-first-in-your-soaraway-CU style, that papers have been signed, hands have been shaken and the Manchester movie-conversion specialists have acquired the rights to the self-same film.

MICROPROSE TO ENTER ARCADES

Home computer simulation specialists Microprose are to make a major assault on the coin-op market, and to prove how seriously they intend their challenge to be they have secured the services of former Atari president Gene Lipkin to head up the new division, known as Microprose Games.

"We're developing our own hardware, our own software, we're starting completely from scratch with our own unique graphics generation system," says UK boss Stuart Bell.

According to Bell Microprose Games' products will be "simulator-type" products but will also feature "most special" gameplay and graphics and will be "of a quality not seen in the arcades before".

"The coin-op industry is without a leader at the moment; we intend to take over that position within a year," he added.

GAMES WORKSHOP SIGN ON



Fans of fantasy role playing games will be thrilled to hear that Mediagenic have just signed up the world's foremost manufacturer of hobby games, Games Workshop, under a three-year licensing deal. The first product of this deal will be a conversion of the Workshop's most successful product to date, *War Hammer*.

We've managed to secure five complete sets of the Workshop's Fantasy Regiment miniatures, and to go with 'em, five copies of the book 'War Hammer Fantasy Battle'. And how do you get in on these goodies? Just be one of the first five CU readers whose postcards come out of the CU tri-cornered hat. Entries, doubleplusquick, to War Hammer Compo, Commodore User, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. No questions to answer, so no brainache.



Commodore screen shots shown.

BUZZ

AFTER

Sega's mould-breaking 3D high-speed aerial shoot 'em up first appeared in '87 to almost rapturous applause. Now, after much speculation and surmise, Activision's officially licensed conversion is about to hit the streets.

Based around two 16-bit processors, a custom graphics chip and a Z80 sound manager, the arcade *Afterburner* sounds like a tough act to follow. However, the Amiga version promises to be almost identical to the original. We spoke to Jez Sans, head of the Argonaut Software programming team, about the project.

'The first thing to be tackled was the horizon, for which we wrote our own routines. 'Next, we worked on the aircraft sprite, getting it to bank and pitch correctly and coordinating this to the movement of the horizon. Movement of the jet is actually smoother than in the arcade, accomplished using 15 frames of animation.'

To give the impression of forward movement, *Afterburner* uses four or five sprites of different sizes, with the inbetween frames generated from the base sprite itself. This is most obvious when the sprites are over-expanded and become blocky.

'Obviously we can't do this using the Amiga's hardware, so we had to produce our own sprite engine, capable of emulating the *Afterburner* hardware. We are constantly refining our routines during development and we can now move 25 to 50 sprites per frame while keeping the update between 50 and 20 frames per second. Of course, this all depends on the size of the sprites used and what they are doing. Sprites are constantly being shrunk or enlarged and rotated to match the orientation of the

Afterburner *on the Mean Machine.*



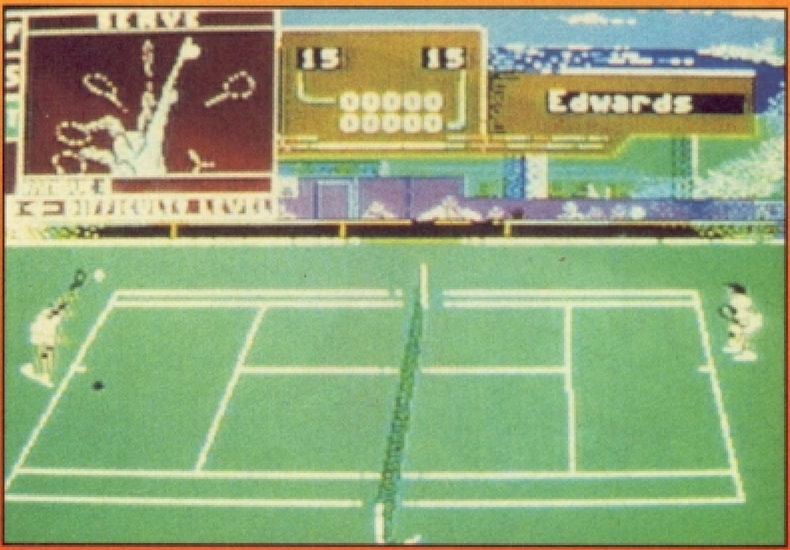


SERVE & VOLLEY

Typical! Just as the summer (*what summer? — Ed.*) breathes its last and a young man's thoughts turn to conkers and football, along come Accolade with a tennis sim. *Serve & Volley* lets you choose from three difficulty levels, three different court surfaces, and the full range of strokes, complete with the various spins and slices that the pros are so fond of using. It also features such hi-techy touches as "Strobe-o-strobe" (described in the accompanying bumpf as "a type of animation that makes the serves and hits appear very realistic"), endurance and power adjustment, and storing of players' statistics. For one or two players, *Serve & Volley* is due out this month.

BOMBOOZAL

We're not sure whether it's all the Glasnost in the air at the moment, but there does seem to be much more cooperation going on between various bods in the software industry. Image Works have already shacked up with Telecomsoft and Psygnosis in the recently-announced Triad joint venture, and now this cheery softco have gathered together some of the top programming talent in the games industry to contribute to *Bomboozal.* With each level of this unusual puzzle game, in which the player has to detonate all the bombs and mines dotted about the playing area while avoiding the unwelcome attentions of various nasties, a different programmer is apparently going to be used, and while the final list has not yet been released, it does sound like a great chance to compare and contrast programming styles. *Bamboozal* will be with you by mid-November.



...RBURNER

landscape, which all uses up processor time. We average out at about 600 sprites per second, but if the sprites were static, we could print well over 1000 in that time.

'Objects are shifted from background to foreground in about 15 or so frames, again, depending upon the size of the sprite. *Afterburner* never uses more than 18 frames, since it moves so fast that any smoother changes would be virtually undetectable anyway.

'We did encounter some problems in following the 3D movement of the arcade machine though. It doesn't use true 3D algorithms to plot its shapes so we refined the movement using our previous experience to make it more mathematically correct. Also, the HUD targetting display is directed more intuitively, since the arcade seemed almost random.

'We currently hold about 1000 sprites in memory, most of which were hand-drawn by a company called Focus, hired by Activision. Each sprite is only made up of four colours, but we're constantly changing the colours scheme, and we can have more than 32 colours on-screen by use of 'copper lists' — these are instructions to a co-processor enabling us to alter the colour palette on each scan line, in a similar way to using raster interrupts on a '64.

'We're confident that *Afterburner* for the Amiga will be the most faithful conversion to date. The speed and gameplay are the same, the graphics are the same, the colour scheme is identical to that used in the arcade (according to Sega's technical specification) and the sound is as good as our memory restrictions will allow — and it's stereo!'

Anyone who saw *Afterburner* being demonstrated at the PC show may or may not agree. Everyone else can make up their own minds when it's released in a couple of week's time.

Meanwhile, Dalalisoft have been busy for the last five months, coding the 64 version. Again, you may have seen the demo running at the PC show, which was finished all but for the last few graphics, the soundtrack and some tweaking.





The 64 version . . . *. . . and the coin-op original*



STARRAY

After our enthusiastic reception to the Amiga version of *StarRay* last ish, no doubt all your 64 owners will be thrilled skinny to hear that the self-same shoot 'em up is soon to be making its appearance on the eight-bit scene too. As with the Amiga *StarRay*, you get to fly your swift-moving, slick-turning starfighter through seven levels, representing seven different planets, each with their own highly individual landscapes and missions. From darkest jungle to barren moonscape, you'll be protecting Installations from destruction or perversion by hosts of aliens, picking up bonus balls and staying alive. *StarRay*, from Logotron, should be available at the beginning of October.



PURPLE HEART

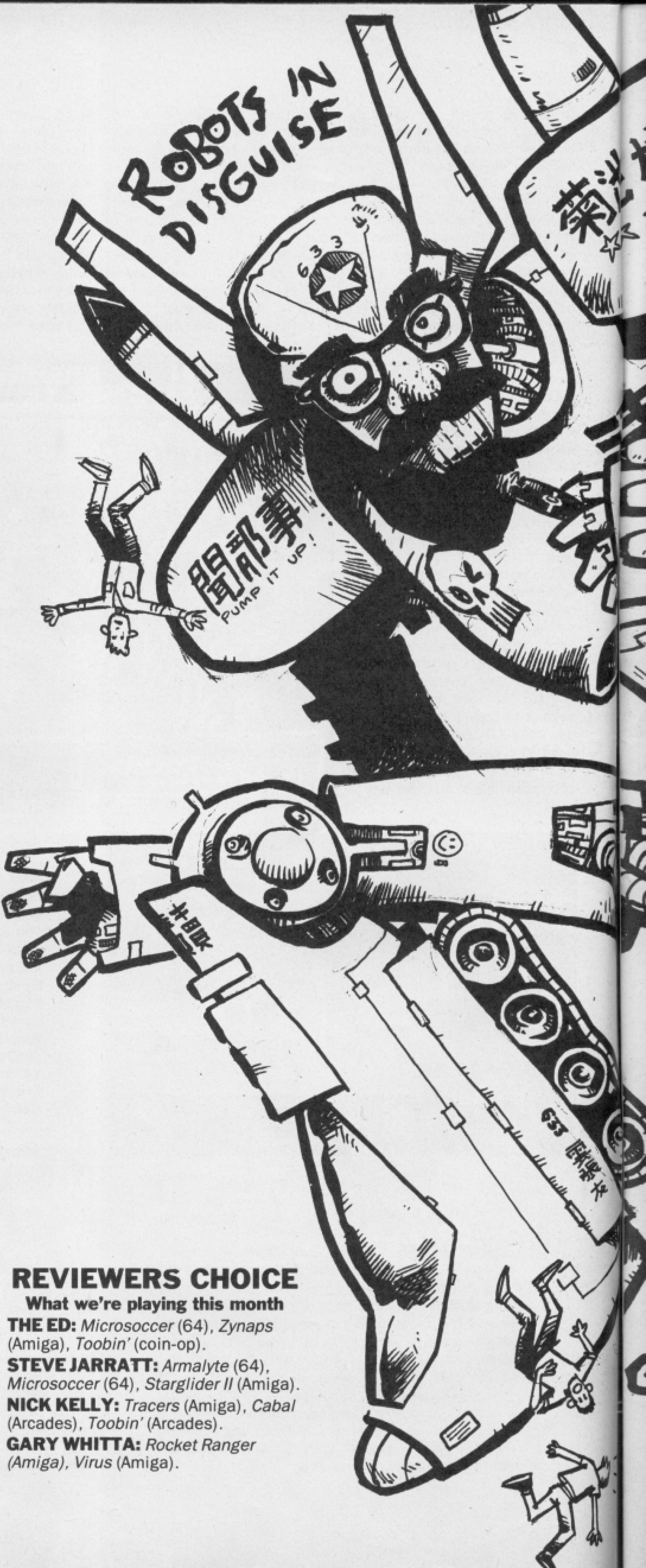
Latest in the long line of *Commando*-flavour shoot 'em ups is CRL's *Purple Heart*, programmed by a young Antipodean (from down under, dolts) by the name of Michael Twigg. Nope, we don't imagine that Michael has crossed very many frontiers or broken many barriers in coming up with this 'un, but with swamps, bridges, gates and tanks to negotiate, machineguns, flame throwers, shotguns and rocket rangers (*shurely shome mishtake? — Ed.*) to collect, and stacks of enemy troops to slaughter over half a dozen levels, we imagine *Purple Heart* will keep you — and an optional mate — occupied at least until the next combat romp comes along.

C64 ADVENTURE CHART

TM	LM		
1	1	BARDS TALE	ELECTRONIC ARTS
2	RE	COLOUR OF MAGIC	ALTERNATIVE
3	NE	PRESIDENT IS MISSING	COSMI/US GOLD
4	NE	HUNT FOR RED OCTOBER	GRANDSLAM
5	NE	KNIGHTMARE	ELECTRONIC DREAMS
6	NE	QUEST FOR THE GOLDEN EGG	MASTERTRONIC
7	NE	BARDS TALE 3	ELECTRONIC ARTS
8	NE	KNIGHT TYME	MASTERTRONIC
9	NE	BACK TO THE FUTURE	ACCESS/US GOLD
10	3	BARDS TALE 2	ELECTRONIC ARTS

C64 CHART

TM	LM		
1	1	FOOTBALL MANAGER 2	ADDICTIVE
2	NE	TRACK SUIT MANAGER	GOLIATH
3	NE	SALAMANDER	IMAGINE
4	NE	HAWKEYE	THALAMUS
5	19	BATTLESHIPS	ENCORE
6	2	EUROPEAN FIVE-A-SIDE	FIREBIRD
7	6	FRANK BRUNO'S BOXING	ENCORE
8	7	RALLY DRIVER	ALTERNATIVE
9	4	AIR WOLF	ENCORE
10	14	STUNT BIKE SIMULATOR	FIREBIRD
11	3	A C E	CASCADE
12	NE	ROAD BLASTERS	US-GOLD
13	9	STEVE DAVIS SNOOKER	BLUE RIBBON
14	16	ROCKY HORROR SHOW	ALTERNATIVE
15	NE	NINJA SCOOTER SIMULATOR	FIREBIRD
16	9	YOGI BEAR	ALTERNATIVE
17	NE	WE ARE THE CHAMPIONS	OCEAN
18	10	SAMANTHA FOX STRIP POKER	REACTOR
19	13	GHOSTBUSTERS	MASTERTRONIC
20	NE	EMPIRE STRIKES BACK	DOMARK



REVIEWERS CHOICE

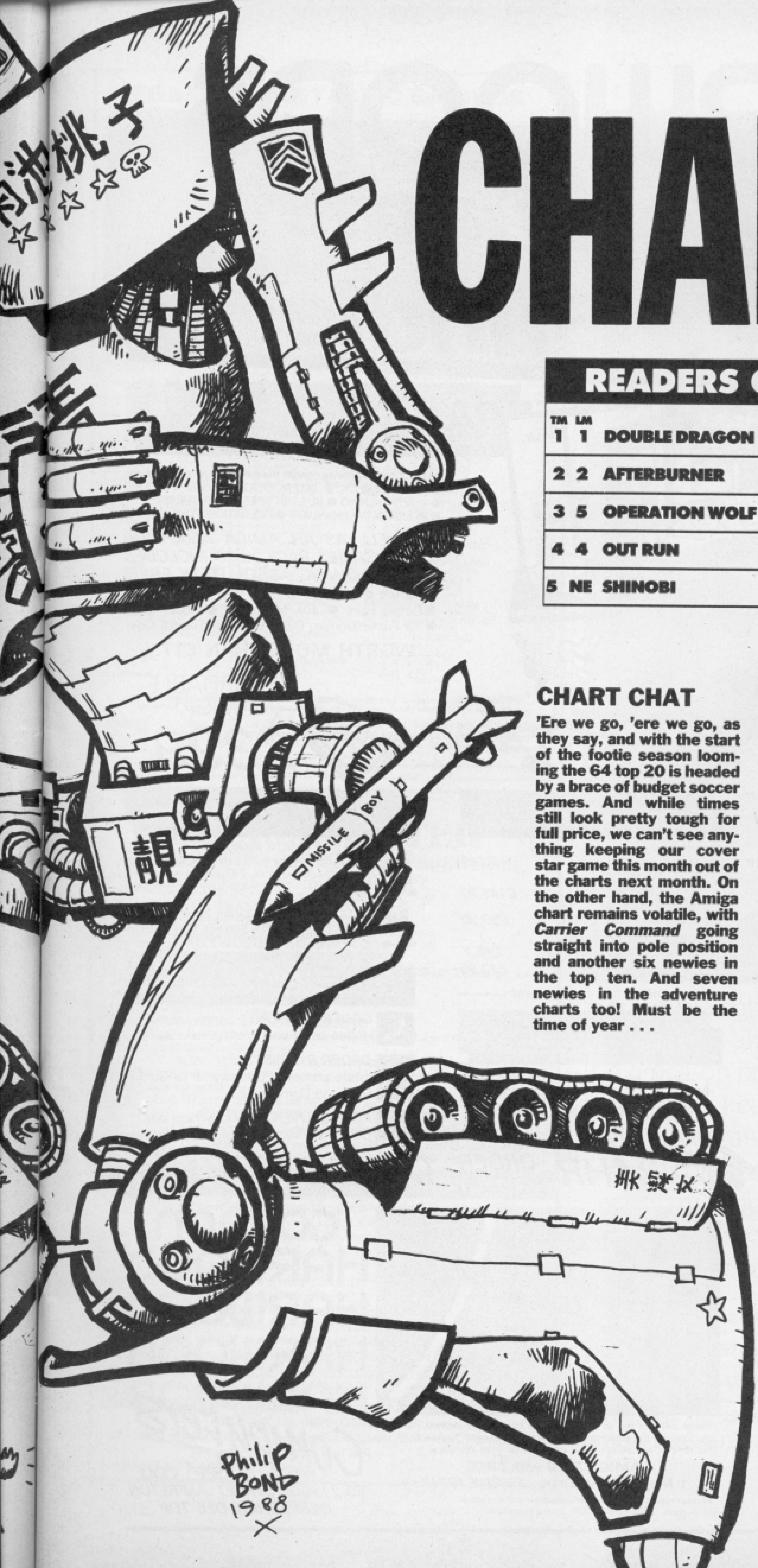
What we're playing this month

THE ED: *Microsoccer* (64), *Zynaps* (Amiga), *Toobin'* (coin-op).

STEVE JARRATT: *Armalyte* (64), *Microsoccer* (64), *Starglider II* (Amiga).

NICK KELLY: *Tracers* (Amiga), *Cabal* (Arcades), *Toobin'* (Arcades).

GARY WHITTA: *Rocket Ranger (Amiga)*, *Virus* (Amiga).



CHARTS

READERS COIN-OP CHART

TM	LM	
1	1	DOUBLE DRAGON
2	2	AFTERBURNER
3	5	OPERATION WOLF
4	4	OUT RUN
5	NE	SHINOBI

Double Dragon stays on top of the heap, but _Operation Wolf_ climbs two places as the Uziful blast 'em up gets played by more and more folks around the country. And just coming into the top five is Sega's _Shinobi_, now signed for conversion by FIL. Keep those top fives coming to Readers Coin-op Chart, CU, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU.

CHART CHAT

'Ere we go, 'ere we go, as they say, and with the start of the footie season looming the 64 top 20 is headed by a brace of budget soccer games. And while times still look pretty tough for full price, we can't see anything keeping our cover star game this month out of the charts next month. On the other hand, the Amiga chart remains volatile, with _Carrier Command_ going straight into pole position and another six newies in the top ten. And seven newies in the adventure charts too! Must be the time of year . . .

AMIGA CHART

TM	LM		
1	NE	CARRIER COMMAND	RAINBIRD
2	1	INTERCEPTOR	ELECTRONIC ARTS
3	NE	ALIEN SYNDROME	ACE
4	9	IKARI WARRIORS	ELITE
5	6	BLACK LAMP	FIREBIRD
6	NE	BIONIC COMMANDOS	CAPCOM/GO!
7	NE	EMPIRE STRIKES BACK	DOMARK
8	NE	GREAT GIANA SISTERS	RAINBOW ARTS
9	NE	FERRARI FORMULA 1	ELECTRONIC ARTS
10	NE	STREET FIGHTER	CAPCOM/GO!

TEN LETTERS WE'RE GLAD THE STRIKE DELAYED

1. Tony Dillon's 'Sex Dwarves From Phi Beta Three' play-by-mail instalment.
2. Nick Kelly's telephone bill.
3. Mike Pattenden's RSPCA newsletter.
4. Nigel Taylor's slam-dancing correspondence course.
5. Eugene Lacey's free year's supply of Winalot.
6. Steve Jarratt's clinic test results.
7. All those perfumed Y-fronts you keep sending us.
8. Gary Penn's ransom note (with ear enclosed).
9. Our hate mail.
10. Gary Williams' Weight-Watchers Monthly Magazine.

MEGASAVE FANTASTIC SAVINGS

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A.T.F.	D2	6.45	NORTH STAR	D3	6.45	4 HITS (HEWSON)	D3	6.45
BOOT CAMP 19	D3	6.45	NIGEL MANSELL PRIX	D1	7.25	AMIGA		
BLOOD BROTHERS	D3	6.45	NIMITZ	D3	6.45	ALIEN SYNDROME		12.95
BLACK LAMP	D2	6.25	NIGHT RAIDER	D3	6.45	BARBARIAN II		12.75
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BEST OF ELITE	D5	10.95	OVERLANDER	D4	6.45	BUGGY BOY		12.75
BASKET MASTER		6.25	OOP'S	D2	6.45	BOMB JACK		15.75
BEYOND ICE PALACE	D4	6.45	PREDATOR	D3	6.25	BEYOND ICE PALACE		15.75
BIONIC COMMANDOS	D4	6.45	PAC-LAND	D3	6.45	BLACKLAMP		12.75
BLACK TIGER	D4	6.45	POWER AT SEA	D1	7.25	BETTER DEAD THAN ALIEN		12.75
BEARDSLEY EURO FOOTB	D3	6.45	PLATOON	D3	6.45	BIRDIE		15.75
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BARBARIAN II	D2	6.45	PHM PEGASUS	D5	7.25	CAPTAIN BLOOD		15.75
CHUCK YEARERS ATF	D5	7.25	PINK PANTHER	D2	6.45	COMBAT SCHOOL		15.75
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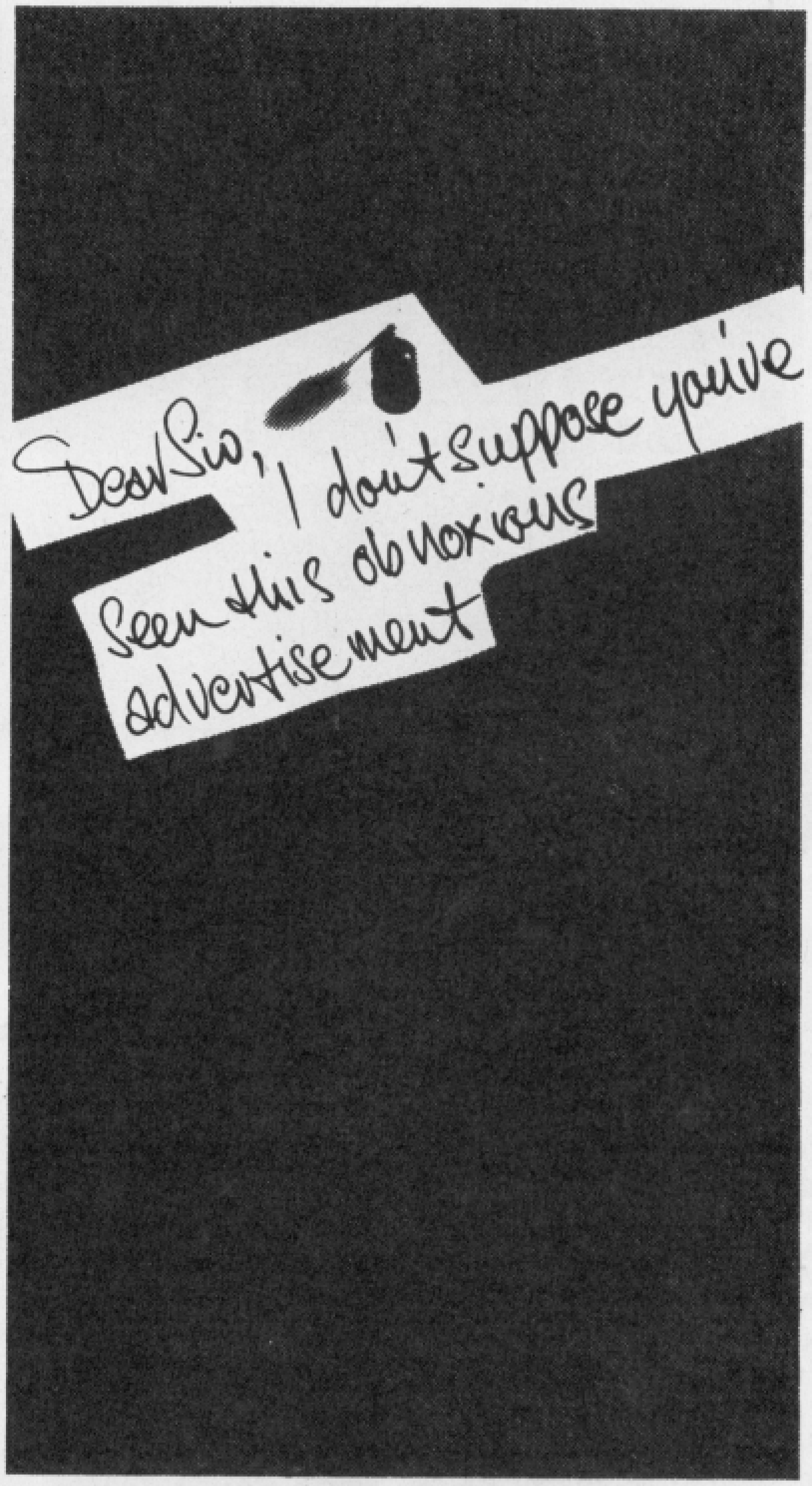
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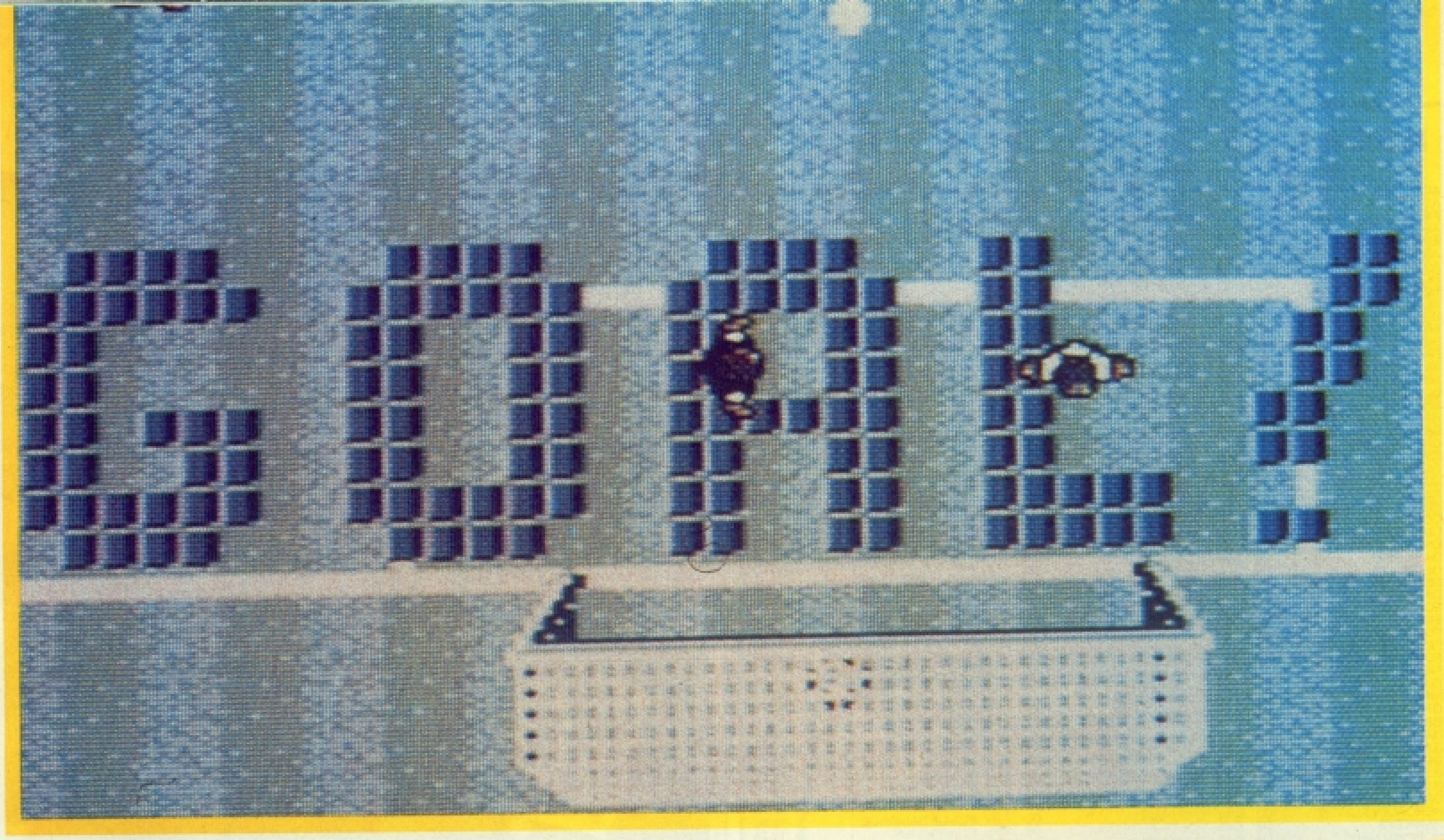
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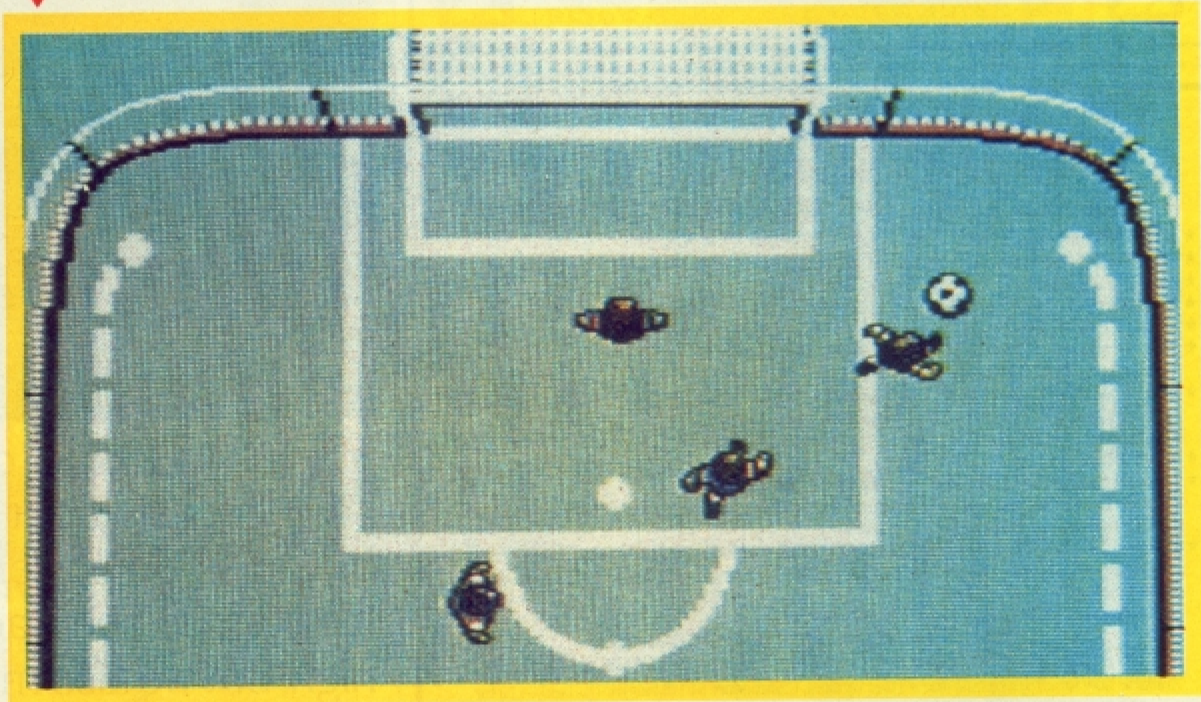
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MICRO

Even Mark Hately could put that one away.



In what has to be the most unusual pairing of the year, Microprose has teamed up with Sensible Software (Cuddly Crix and Jovial Jops) in order to bring you *Microsoccer* — a footballing simulation which provides both indoor and outdoor soccer action.

There are two versions of the sport included in the package, both of which are loaded seperately. A standard eleven-a-side game is played over a multidirectionally scrolling grass field, while an American Rules six-a-side game takes place on a smaller indoor pitch which simply scrolls vertically.

Normal rules apply, with the exception of boring things like offsides (*Should disappoint Spurs and Arsenal fans — Ed*), and each game can be set between two and twelve minutes in length.

Players may challenge each other in a friendly match, or enter into a World Cup competition with up to 16 competitors. This option follows the usual World Cup draw, and includes 29 teams from which to choose your preferred nationality. The remaining countries are represented by the computer when drawn against human players, and each team is graded in difficulty with Brazil being the team to beat. Well it wouldn't be England would it? This also acts as a skill level selection, since it's easier to win playing as Italy, for example, than it is when representing New Zealand.

There's also plenty of scope for the solo player, though, who can enter the World Cup on his own, or take part in the Sensisoft International challenge. This is a table of 16 teams who are played in succession and are increasingly more difficult to beat. If you win, you go up the table — if you lose, you go down. The ultimate aim is therefore to beat the top team, Brazil.

Programs in both leagues can be saved to tape or disk, allowing major competitions to continue over several days' play.

The On-field control method is similar to most games of this sort, and is more or less identical for both the indoor and outdoor versions. Although the whole team is represented on the pitch, only one player comes under your direct control at a time — normally the one closest to the ball. The player constantly dribbles the ball while in possession, and only kicks it once the fire button is pressed. The strength of the shot is determined by the length of time that the button is depressed, and the style of shot is selected by the position of the joystick. You have several shots at your disposal: lobs, volleys, banana shots (which can be set at low, medium and high), and an overhead back-kick, Pele style.

When the opposition have possession of the ball and approach near the goal area, control switches to that of the goalie, signified by a buzzer sounding. The goalie is moved as normal, but on pressing the fire button, he dives left, right or upwards as required.

Tackling is accomplished by running into the opposing player and pressing fire. The player then

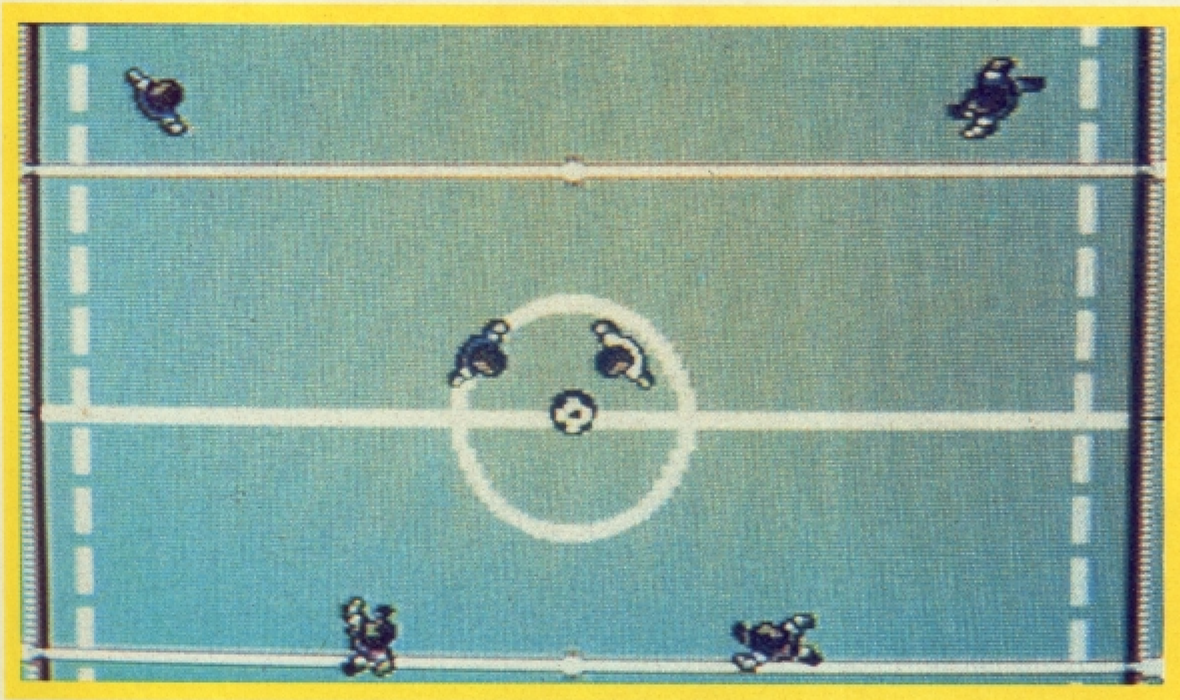
Never! It was offside, ref!



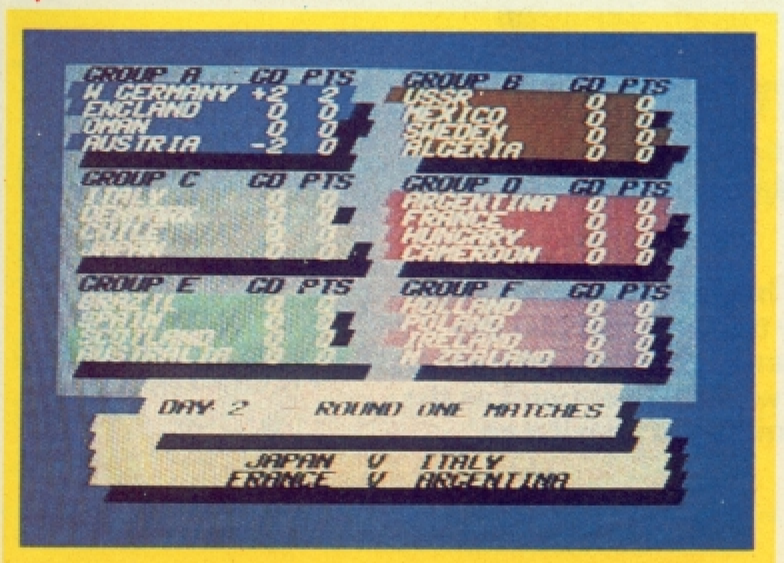
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SOCCER

I don't know but I've been told, CU's mags are made of gold . . .



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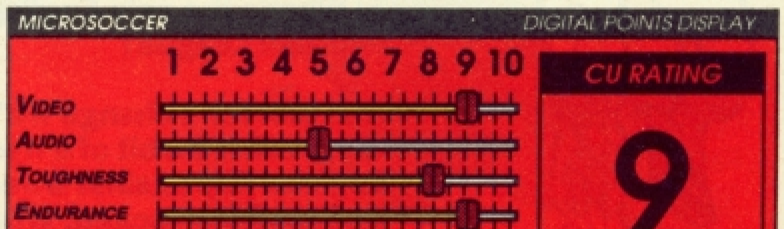
attempts a sliding tackle and either puts the boot in Norman Whiteside style and gains the ball, or goes whizzing past. This is especially tricky when the rain starts falling (accompanied by thunderclaps and lightning flashes) since the tackling player can go spinning around the field if his attack is mis-timed.

Control of your player is quite tricky at first but it doesn't take too long to get to grips with. However, becoming proficient enough to thrash the computer controlled foreigners should take some time.

Microsoccer is also great to look at: the graphics are extremely clear and the animation on the players effective. There are plenty of nice touches throughout such as the rain falling on the pitch, and the amazing action replay; whenever a goal is scored, it's followed by an accurate replay, complete with VTR rewind and noise bars!

The game manages to cover all aspects of the sport, including corners, goal kicks and throw-ins, plus penalty shots and out-of-bounds shots for the six-a-side version, but combines fast arcade style action in what must be the most complete, if not the best football simulation on the 64. One-nil to the Sensible boys.

Steve Jarratt



Over the moon Ron!



Win 2 Season Tickets plus a ball signed by THE ENGLAND SQUAD



One CU! There's only one CU! One seeyewwww! Yep we've lined up another corkin' dead ball CU set-piece of a compo. First prize is two season tickets for the team of your choice be it Wigan or Liverpool. Second prize is a football signed by the entire England squad which played Denmark. Finally 25 runners-up will receive copies of the game.

So what do you have to do to pick that little lot out of CU's collective onion bag? Well we were originally going to do a spot the ball competition, but Nick Kelly forgot his kit so instead we thought up a few traditional CU questions.

1) What's the name of the incredible piscine goalie in Viz comic?
2) Who won the Golden Boot at the European Championships?
3) What was the name of the dog which found the 'lost' World Cup in 1966?
4) Which US soccer team did Pele play for?
5) What's the only *English* team that plays in the Scottish League?

And just for a change we'll have a tiebreaker: Just say, yeah it's a bit of a flyer this one, but just say England flop against Sweden and — bear with us — Robson gets sacked. Who would you appoint as the new manager? Stupid we know but give it a go . . .

Answers on a hoolivan to Commodore User, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU before October 14. The Ed's already got a season ticket for West Ham *(anybody want it? MP)* so he can't enter, but nobody else connected with EMAP or the magazine should do either, cos we'll get well miffed if we find out.





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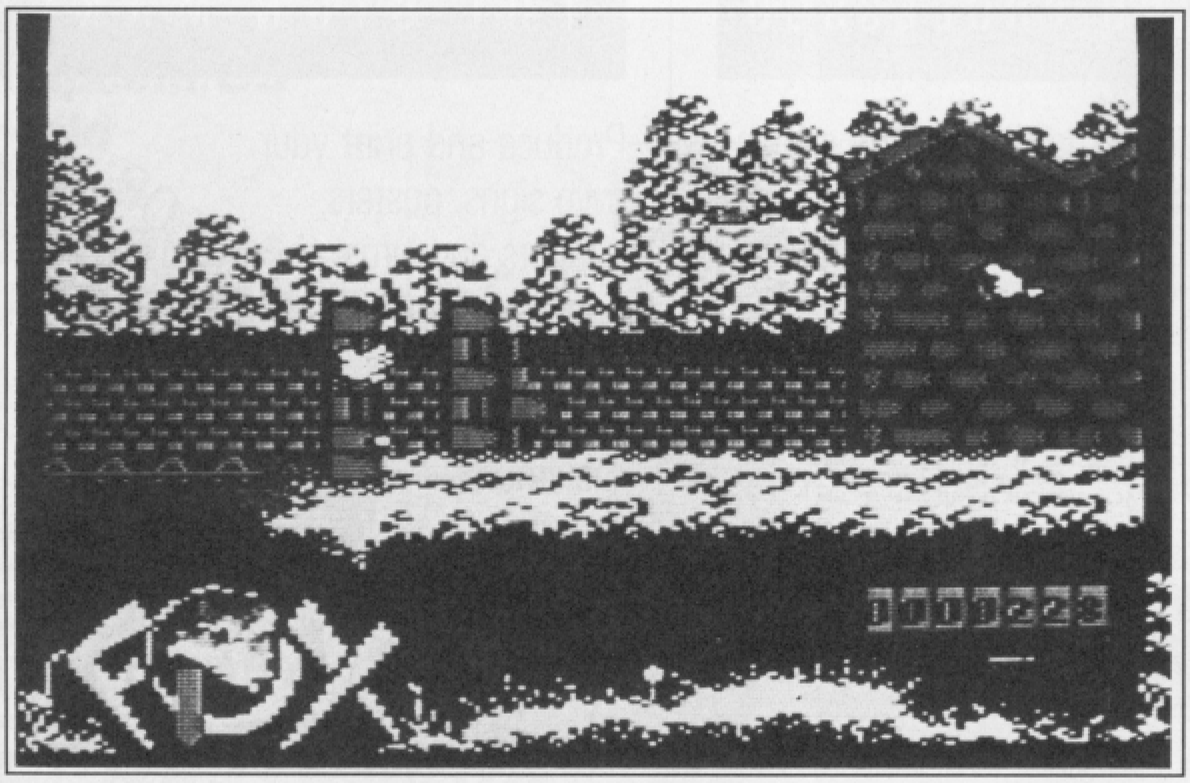
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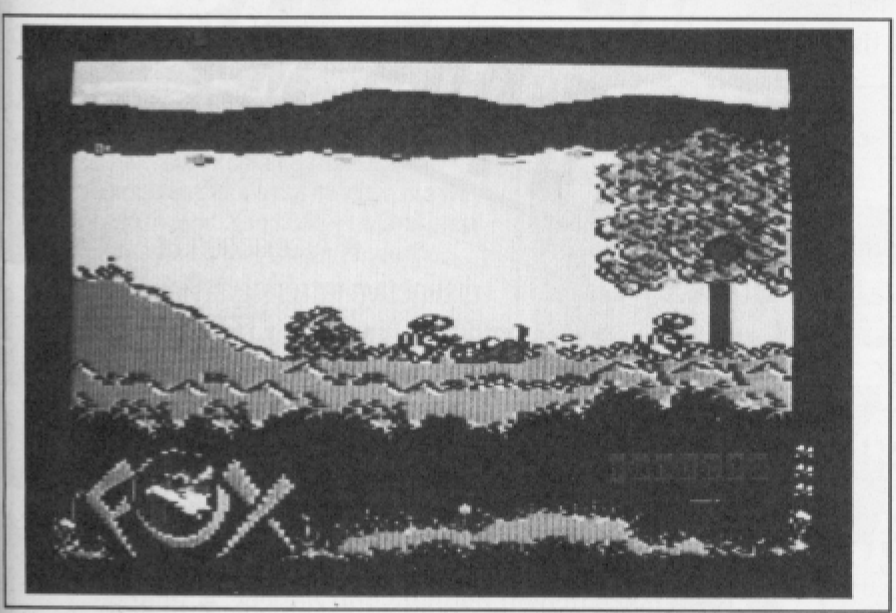
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▲ *Chicken in the basket.*



◀ *Foxx off.*

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Foxx Fights Back

Oscar Wilde called fox hunting "the unspeakable in pursuit of the uneatable" and if, like me, you agree then *Foxx Fights Back* might gladden you a little. It's a game that should appeal to all those people who would like to give clubs to seals and peopleskin coats to mink and leopards. It's also a lot of fun.

In *FFB* we follow the routine life of Mr Foxx a member of the vulpine race who has to take all kinds of stick above ground from the local wildlife and below ground from his demanding vixstress. *FFB* gains full marks for animal rights cred but falls down a little on its sexism. No matter for Mr Foxx has had just about enough. His four-legged spouse sends him out for some food and he's attacked by bomb throwing squirrels, beagles on bikes (shouldn't they be smoking cigarettes somewhere?) and rock throwing badgers (who should know better). So ignoring the firearms amnesty he turns the tables on the whole miserable lot by blowing away anything that hinders his foraging.

That I suppose boils it down to a collectable shoot 'em up, but Mediagenic can relax because it looks nothing like *R-Type*. The screen scrolls left and right and Mr F can jump and run through its various stages looking for tasty bunnies below ground or chickens sitting waiting to be eaten in their coop. There are collectable items in the shape of apples, pies and sausages which you take back to the wife. Both kinds restore stamina to a flagging fox.

Weapons can be picked up in the shape of shotguns and grenades to make fighting off the malicious wildlife a bit easier and an extra life can be obtained by finding a huntsmen's horn. Dying sends you back to the beginning of that particular section of what is a pretty large playing area.

FFB is fun to play and pretty good to look at too. It's a Denton Designs game surprisingly and although it doesn't have the kind of depth of many of their efforts, it's by no means a bimbo program. The graphics are colourful and cute, whilst Mr Foxx leaps and bounds in smoothly executed animation. Sound too is excellent with some good effects and some jolly classical renditions.

All in all it's a polished game but it just lacks that certain something to warm the heart of a real hunt saboteur.

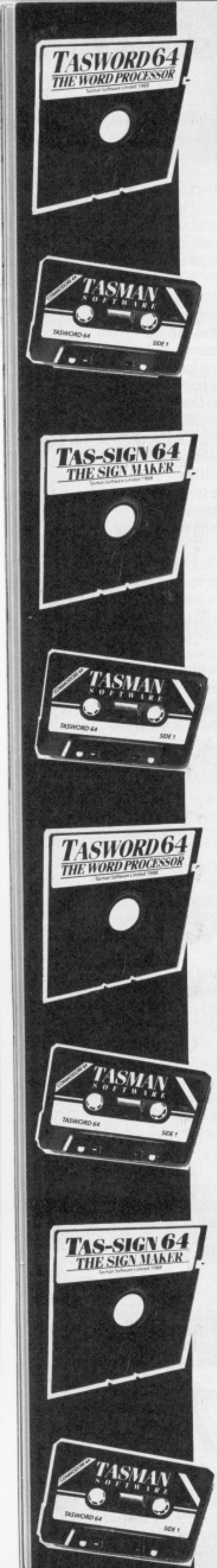
Mike Pattenden

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29th December 1985

Dear John,

Thankyou for your letter of 12th December concerning our trip to France in the
new year. I think that your suggestion of our flying out together from
Birmingham is a good idea. It's roughly the same distance for each of us to
drive and if there are any flight delays we can at least finalise some of the
details over a coffee.

Let's meet at the check in desk at about 4.00p.m. If Jane finds that she can get
the time off work then please let me know straight away and I'll book another
seat on the flight.

I hope you don't mind me reminding you to make sure that you have your passport
when you leave home! We don't really want a repeat of the last time when the
Line   1|Col   1|R/J on |W/W on | Insert off| Paging on | f3 for help |  normal
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--------------------------------------------------
              CURSOR  CONTROL
Δ↑   start of text       Δ*   end of text
Δ[   start of line       Δ]   end of line
f1   scroll up           f7   scroll down
Δf1  fast scroll up      Δf7  fast scroll down
Δ<   word left           Δ>   word right
HOME top of display      Δ0   40/80 columns
--------------------------------------------------
           FORMATTING COMMANDS
ΔQ   move text left      ΔE   move text right
ΔH   centre line         ΔU   hard justify
ΔK   justify line        ΔL   unjustify line
ΔJ   justify para
--------------------------------------------------
                 SWITCHES
ΔP   paging    on/off    ΔH  insert    on/off
ΔG   wordwrap  on/off    ΔF  justify   on/off
--------------------------------------------------
           TEXT FILE COMMANDS
ΔRETURN for save/load/merge/print/clear
--------------------------------------------------
  Δ = CTRL      f3 for more help     ▼ = SHIFT
   Press RETURN to get back to text file
```

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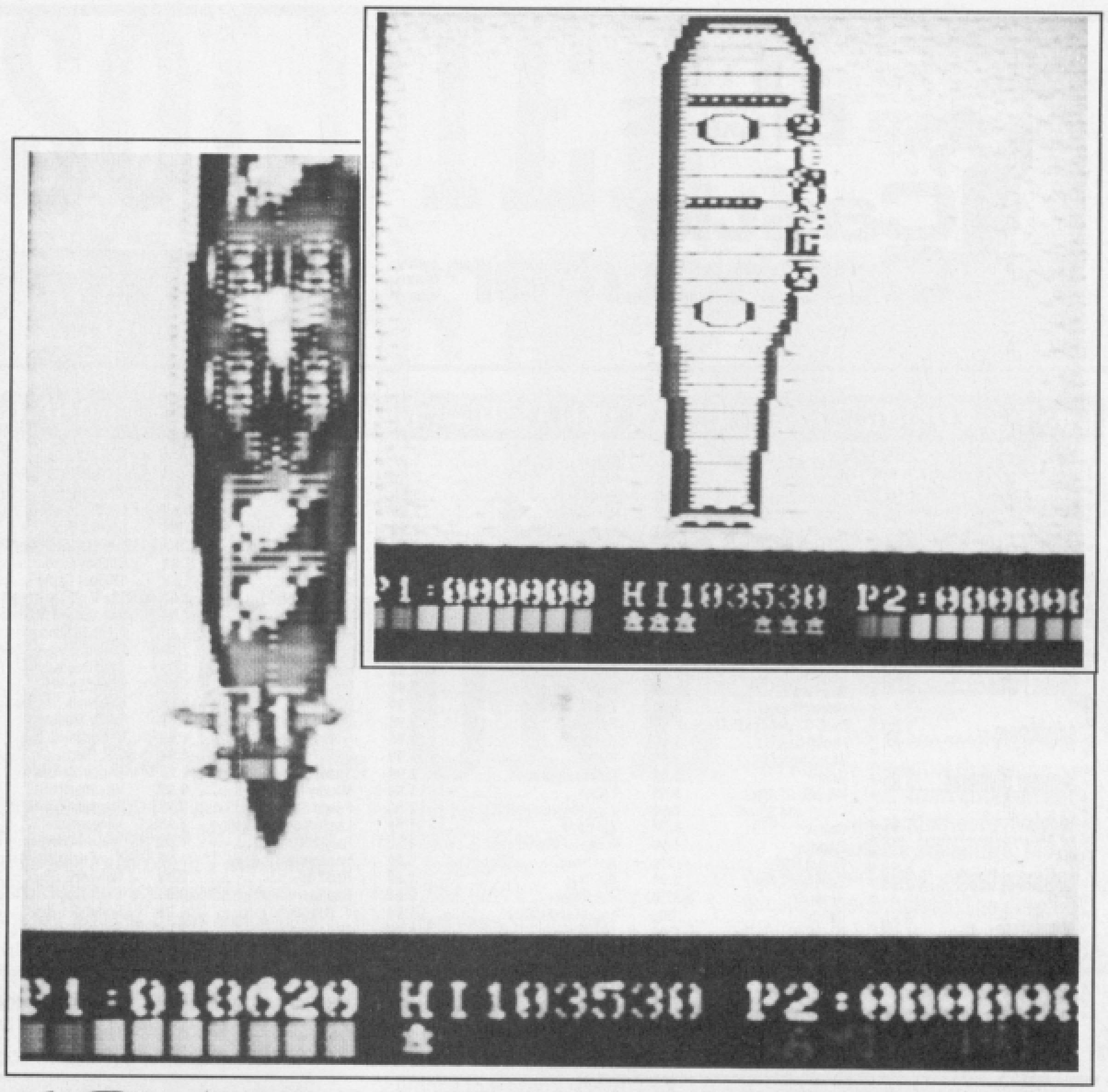
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1943 THE Battle of Midway

64/128
Capcom/US Gold
Price:
£9.99/cass
£14.99/disk



1943, The Battle of Medway is Capcom's sequel to the successful *1942* coin-op, which also appeared on the 64 many moons ago. The bright idea behind the new version is to retain the familiar format but to make a few enhancements. In short (and why be charitable), they're squeezing more juice out of an old lemon. Not that *1942* was a lemon, the analogy just seemed to fit.

The new version retains a great deal of the *1942* formula. You get the same downward scrolling seascape, with you in charge of the now-familiar twin-propellered sea-plane. It even performs the obligatory loop-the-loop immediately after taking off from the aircraft carrier. Like the original, there's not much in the way of strategy. You simply try and blast everything that comes down the screen at you.

But the similarities end there. The new version sets out to be more of a prolonged blast. In 1942 you could lose all three lives within minutes and get sent back to the very beginning — which is slightly more annoying than missing Brookside.

1943 still gives you three lives but they don't seem to disappear as quickly. Each life is dependent on a damage meter at the bottom left of the screen. When enemy planes bump into you (some of them don't even fire) the meter goes down a little. At rock bottom, you lose a life. Some planes, though, do fire and will lose you a life immediately. The damage meter can be made to go up again by collecting the occasional POW symbol that floats down the screen.

Changes have been made on each level too. Now you have two phases per level to contend with. Firstly, you must destroy the attack waves of enemy planes before going on to the second phase which involves inflicting damage on enemy shipping as well as their protecting waves of planes.

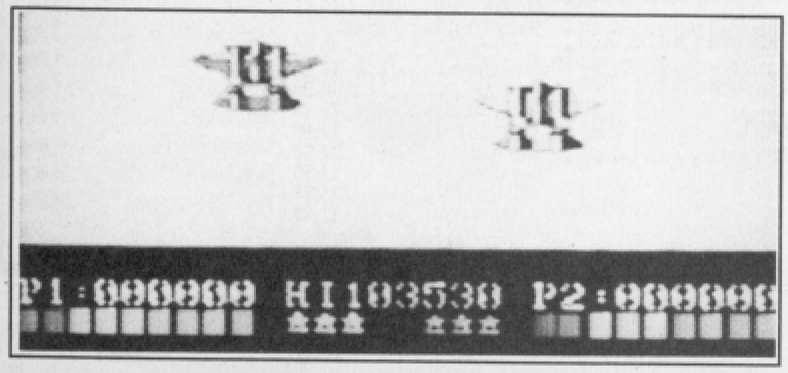
If you don't manage to knock out all the gun turrets on the enemy vessels, a "mission unsuccessful" message appears on-screen and you go back to the beginning of that level — thankfully not to the beginning of the game. As you progress up the levels, there are more enemy vessels to blast before your mission has succeeded.

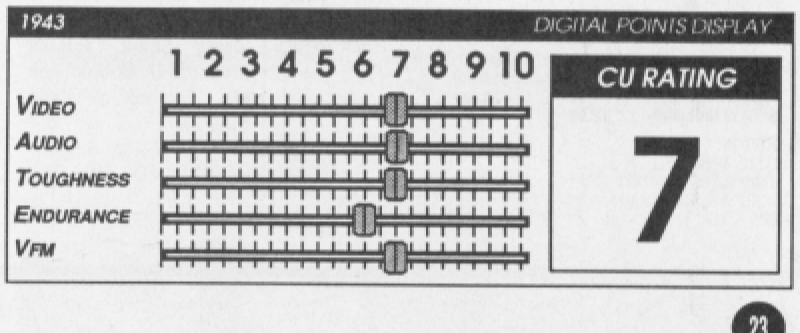
Anyway, back to those POW symbols. In *1942*, you could zap them by mistake. Not in this version. POW symbols change into one of four other symbols when hit. Collect one of these and you enhance your firepower in one of four different ways. Shooting at the symbol changes into another one. So you can choose the weaponry you'll get simply by firing until you get the right symbol.

This is tactically important because you'll need the right kind of weaponry for different situations and for blasting different planes and vessels. Oh, and by the way, there's a welcome two-player option thrown in as well.

1943 is less of a manic blast than its predecessor in the early levels and accomplished zappers might get bored wading through the simple stuff before the real skill begins. Apart from that *1943* is well up to standard, although I can't help feeling this kind of game is well passed it. So if you've never done that loop the loop, this game's worth a try, but try to stifle those yawns if you have.

Bohdan Buciak





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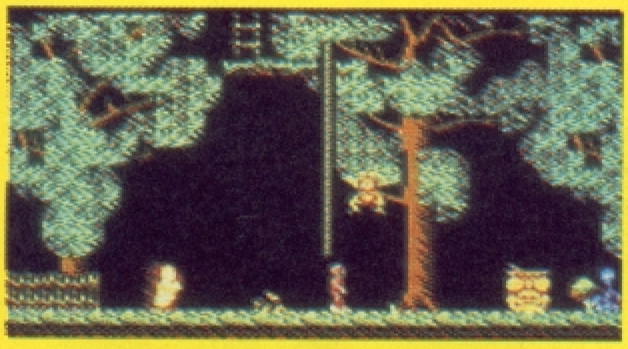
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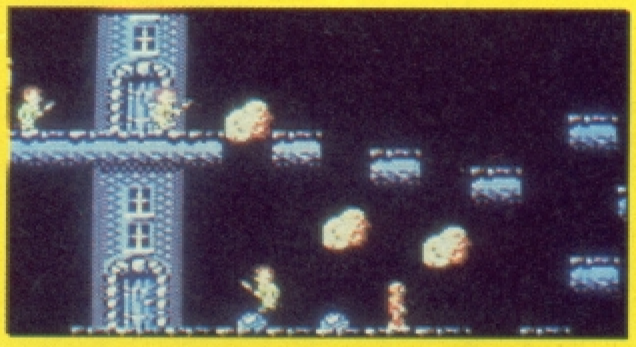
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Funny old things, Zodiac power sources. One minute they're all safe and sound, lying in the right hands, doing no harm to anybody, and the next off they go being nicked and put to bad use. Then, just as you're being told how to get them back, would you believe it, the ground opens up, spits out fire, and then swallows up the geezer who you are talking to.

Still, geezer or no geezer, you have to get the Zodiac power source back before twelve moons pass, or Kryllis (your average baddy) will succeed in his quest to rule the world. Armed with a feeble magical weapon, a small handful of lives and 100 gold pieces, off you trot across the left to right scrolling landscape, not completely unlike a cross between *Ghosts* and *Goblins* and *Firelord.*

The coins are used to buy lots of different goodies in the hundreds of shops that line the pathways. You can buy different weapons to replace the one you start with. Unfortunately, each of these weapons only has a limited life — normally 100 uses. Once used up, they disappear, and it's back to the starter weapon. You buy lots of extra lives (provided you can afford it) as well as scrolls. It's with these scrolls that you can barter for specific objects. Some shopkeepers, for example, won't sell you a certain item unless you have the moon scroll. Obviously you quickly run out of coins, and more coins can be obtained by (a) shooting the nasties that occasionally feebly try to stop you, such as fire-zombies, or strange floating phantoms; or (b) you can shoot large cauldrons a few times, each hit resulting in either the release of a coin or a nasty. You have to catch the coins quickly, as each time they bounce, they crack and lose value until they disintegrate. Needless to say, the more money you have, the better equipment you can buy.

At various points along the long and dusty roads, you'll find buildings that aren't shops. One such construction is the Sky tower. A tall, vertically scrolling pillar of screens that can yield some pretty rewards. Another is the House of Fun, where you'll find a large dragon flying around that changes colour when shot in the head, more than a little like *Space Harrier.*

In fact, I think I can safely say that every single aspect of this game has been 'borrowed' from another, and has been slung together to make a very good arcade adventure. Maybe not Graftgold's best ever game, but excellent nonetheless. The graphics, though not huge, are colourful and more than adequate. Sound effects are simple and effective and some of the clangs and whistles are quite attractive.

The scrolling is first rate, and as far as I could tell, there's no slowing down or flicker at all, even when something like the swirling dragon comes on screen.

Soldier of Fortune isn't the best game I've ever played on the 64, nor is it the most addictive, but it's fun, and interesting enough to hold my attention for a few days, which is really saying something considering my attention span.

Tony Dillon

SOLDIER OF FORTUNE — DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY

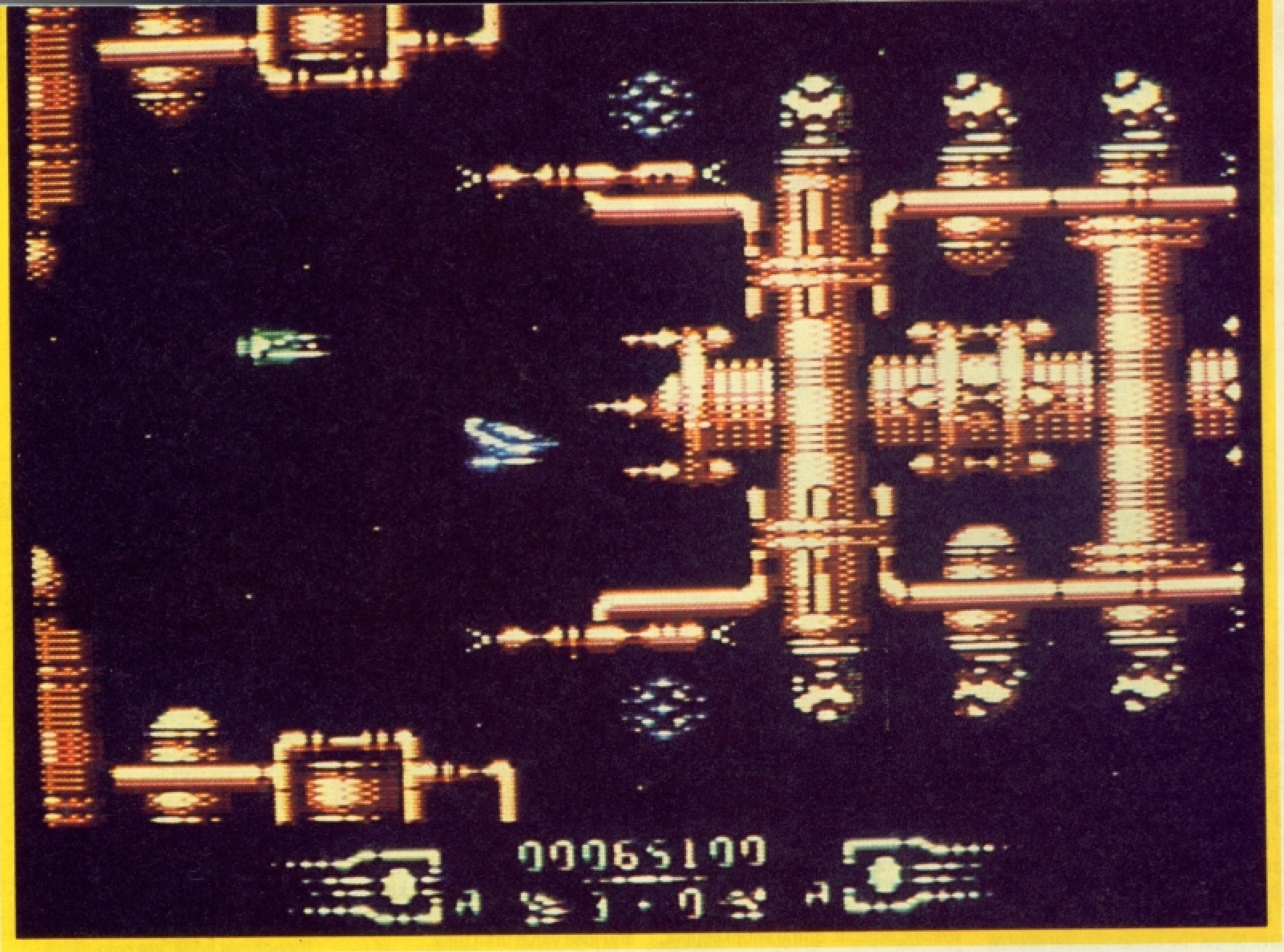
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CU RATING **7**

A walk in the forest and a spot of shopping





ARMA

Armalyte
Thalamus
Price: £9.99 cass £12.99 disk

Billed as the follow-up to *Delta, Armalyte* has been coded by a group of youngsters from Exeter, called Cyberdyne Systems. This is their first game — and it's a goodie, too.

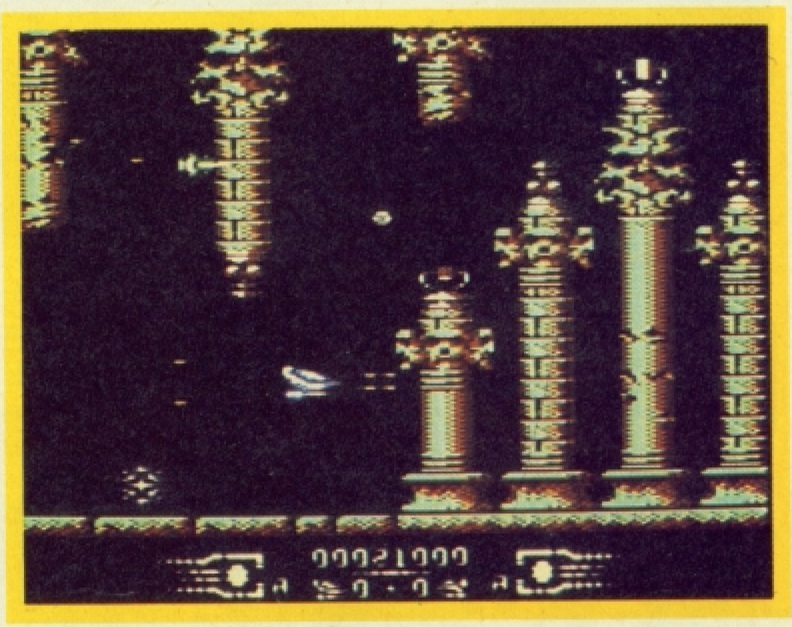
Taking the form of a *Nemesis/ Salamander* variant, *Armalyte* offers eight levels of simultaneous two-player blasting action, set after the Delta mission, when the alien H'Siffan force were routed by a lone Terran pilot. In their haste to leg it back home, the H'Siffans left a load of valuable alien artifacts behind. On hearing this, an unscrupulous Terran Corporation chairman has hired two mercenaries to infiltrate the area in question, and retrieve the priceless items. With this in mind, the main aim is simply to progress as far as possible while slaughtering as many of the remaining H'Siffan forces as you can.

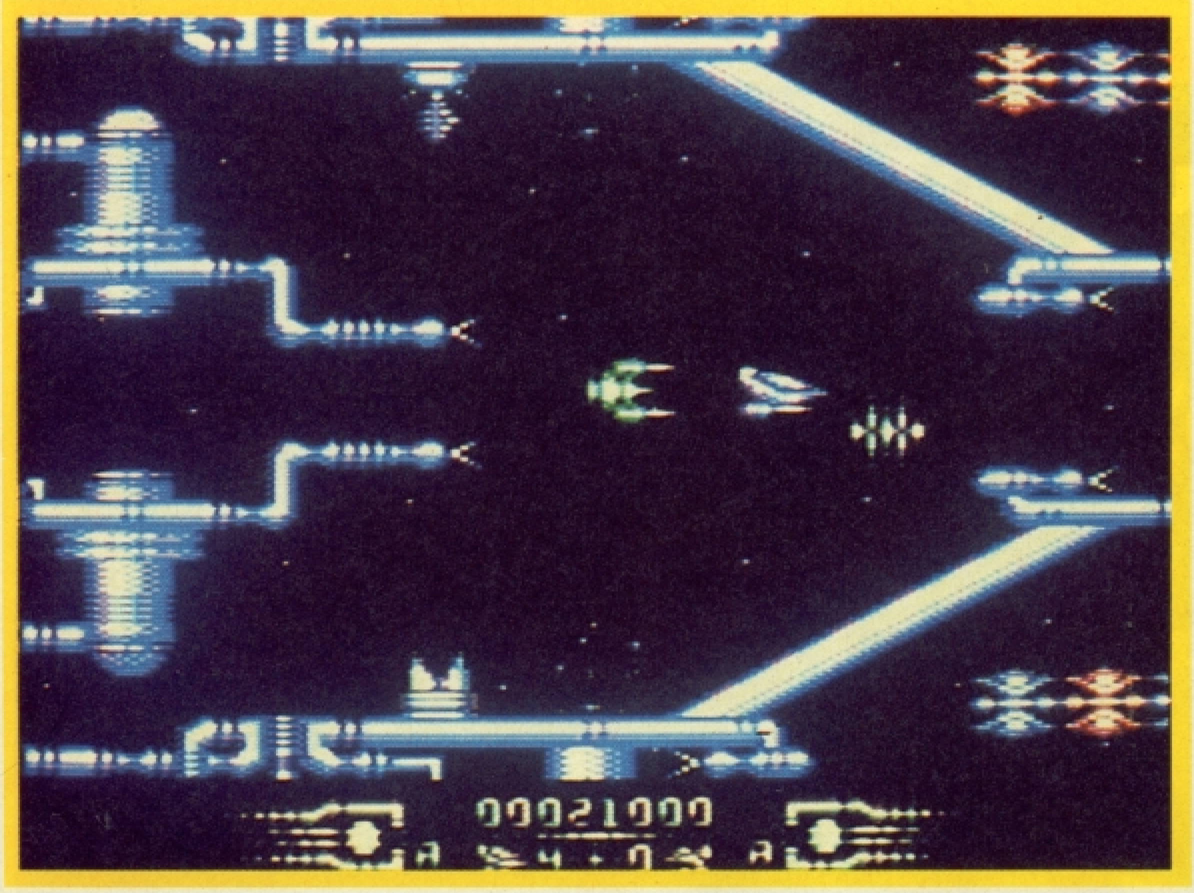
One or two players may embark upon the mission, the solo player having the second ship to act as a *Nemesis*-style multiple, firing in unison with the first. This ship can also be positioned at one place on the screen by tapping the space bar at the required moment; the drone vessel separates from the mothership to give covering fire from its static location.

In two-player mode, the two ships can make contact, shoving each other out of the way. This can cause problems at various points throughout the landscape where gaps in the architecture are only one ship big. The more unethical of partners can, of course, help to reduce their comrade's stock of hardware too!

Each ship's armoury can be augmented by collection of additional equipment, provided by changeable icons. Blasting the icons causes them to cycle through the available add-ons, from a simple munitions pod to vertically firing' lasers, and temporary shields.

Repeated collection of the same icon progressively improves that equipment, and once gained is not lost on destruction of the ship. In addition, there is a generator and battery for increasing the efficiency of the current super weapon. Three





Level 1's cool blue metal.

LYTE

such devices can be selected from keyboard, and in play, holding down the fire button sends a high-powered beam flying across the screen, liquidating all in its path. The weapon can only then be re-used once its energy pack has recharged; the battery and recharger are collected to speed up this process.

The 64 has really been pushed to its limits here: there are huge amounts of aliens, and the action can become breathtakingly hectic — real adrenalin-pumping stuff. And there's not a glitch in sight.

The graphics too are exceptional, from the small but beautifully animated walkers to the variety of gorgeous backdrops and the huge end-of-level meanies.

Yes, it is another horizontal scroller — but it's also one of the best.

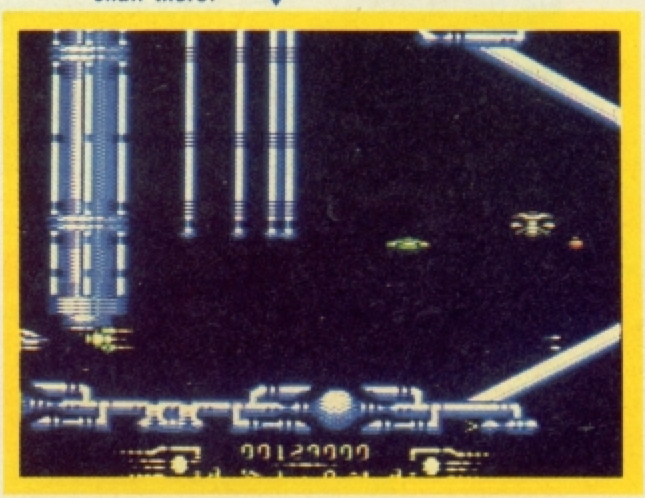
Steve Jarratt

TECH DATA

- *Armalyte* runs a full-screen scrolling routine, updating every 1/50th of a second. Ace programmer Andrew Braybrook once said this was impossible on the 64 . . .
- In the heat of battle there can be up to 34 sprites on-screen (including eight which make up the lower border display).
- The large, end of level motherships are made up of around 16 sprites each.
- With both ships blasting away, there are up to 160 bullets on-screen at once.
- Each level consists of 32 screens — with eight levels, this makes a total of around 256 screens.
- All the alien ships are individually sequenced; although they fly in formation, each ship follows its own flight path.

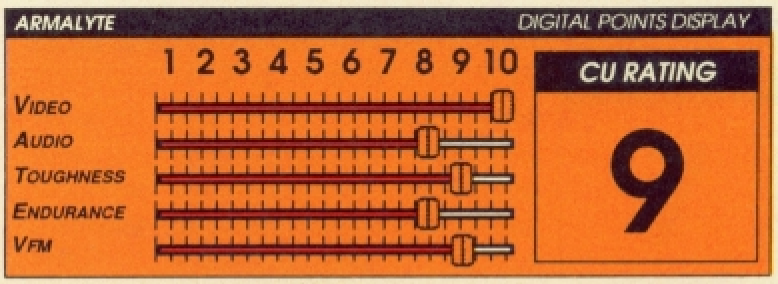
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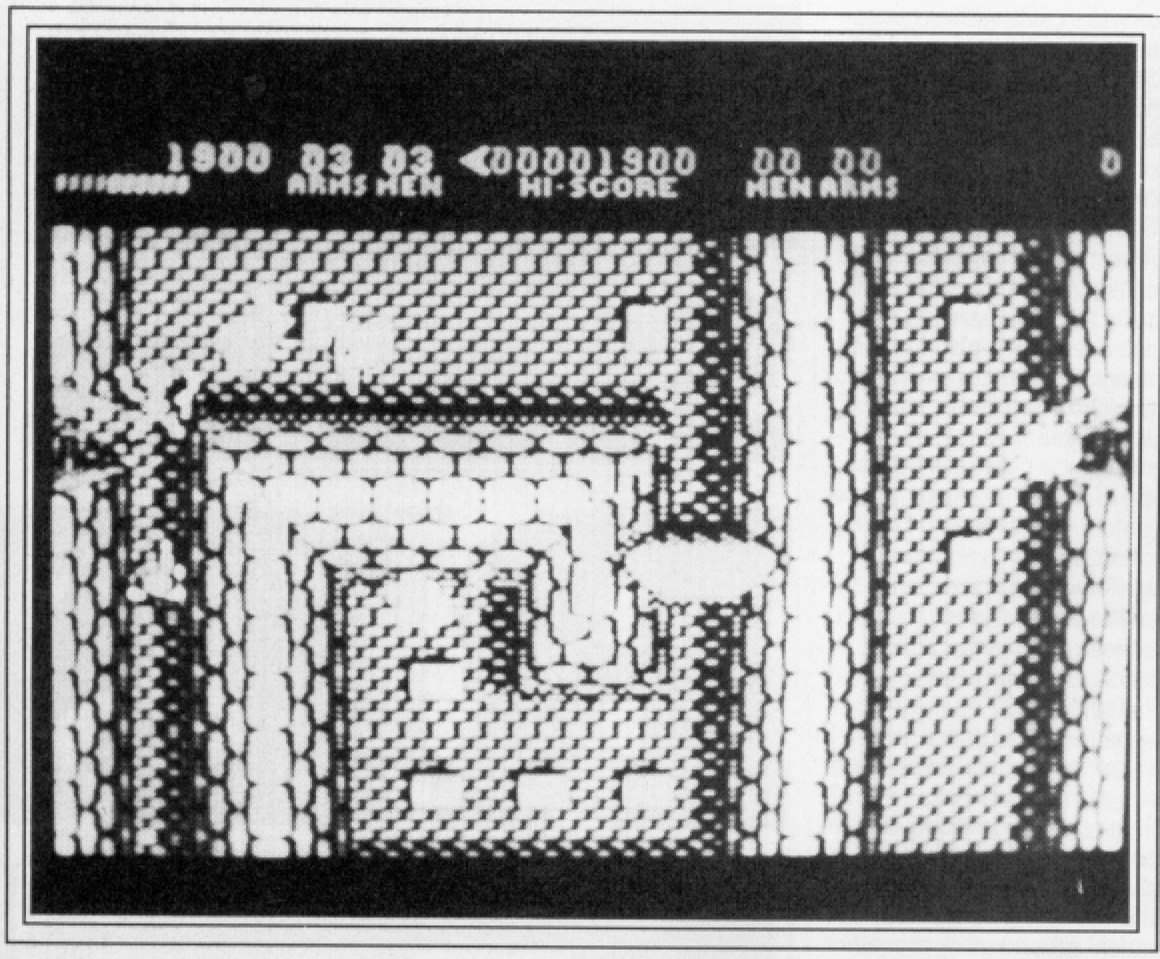
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Looks like you've walked into the eagle's nest.

FERNANDEZ must die!

64/128 Imageworks/Mirrorsoft

This is a strangely obscure title for a game which doesn't actually feature anybody called Fernandez, dead or otherwise.

In fact it's the latest collaboration from the team which gave us the ingenious and sadly underrated *Zig Zag* last year, David Bishop and the wayward Tony Crowther.

It's a foray into the much-explored territory of the vertically-scrolling *Commando*-type shoot-out. Your mission this time is — supposedly — to locate and destroy the eight military bases of a dictator. But, as is often the case with this kind of total annihilation experience, you tend to lose sight of your objective in all the excitement.

We get a familiar bird's-eye view of the action, looking down on hordes of enemy helmets trundling back and forth across a landscape of roads and rivers, buildings and bunkers. Everything is depicted with clarity and detail, even if the scale is sometimes bizarre, and the overall effect is a bit like a very busy model railway layout.

And it's your job to blow the whole thing to bits. Armed with endless ammo, 20 grenades and five lives, you jump from your truck and wade into the melee, cutting a swathe of mayhem through the ranks of the remarkably dumb enemy soldiers and tanks. Fun as this is, it's more so when you liberate an abandoned jeep — then you can run people over as well as shoot them, and you're relatively safe from hostile bullets.

All this havoc will score a few brownie points, but to start clocking up six digits or more you've got to do some exploring sideways. Closed doors to the left or right of the screen lead to enemy bunkers, and passing through these will take you into the neighbouring landscape — similar scenery, but a different colour.

Doors can be shattered by grenades, or armour-piercing bazooka shells from the jeep, and once inside the bunker you'll find yourself in a maze of sandbags, with bars of gold, ammunition and prisoners-of-war scattered around the shop. Remember Pandora's *Into the Eagle's Nest*, from early 1987?

The score counter starts blurring now, with 900 points for each released POW, and hitting the Commodore key will call up an instant status screen which displays the amount of gold collected, POWs released and bases destroyed.

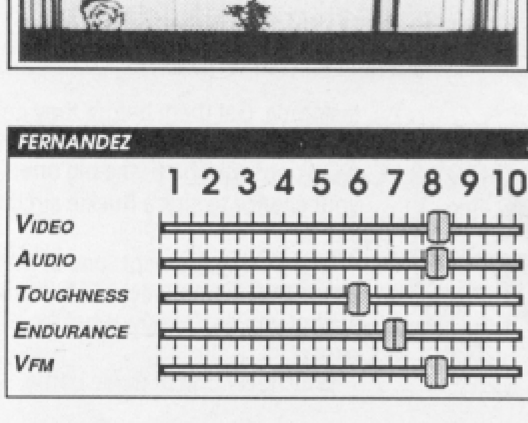
Finding the bases is not so easy, and to reach each requires threading an indirect route through various bunkers and landscapes, working your way around the impenetrable barriers whch often protect each base. A map of the entire playing area, with walls and bases usefully highlighted, can be accessed by pressing Run/Stop.

By now it's clear that Fernandez borrows from just about every *Commando* and *Gauntlet* variation there is, but so what? It's attraction lies in the sheer skill with which it's been assembled, and in the attention to detail that's been lavished on the enterprise.

And I've left the best until last. There's also a two-player mode, where partners can cover each other as they stride into action, and onboard the jeep, one steers while the other lets loose with the machine gun.

As unoriginal as hell, *Fernandez Must Die* nevertheless shows us two programmers doing what they're best at, and doing it with style. After the delights of *Zig Zag* maybe Ratt 'n' Bish are just marking time, but I for one ain't complaining.

Bill Scolding



Price: £9.99/ cass £12.99/ disk

FERNANDEZ — DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Video

Audio

Toughness

Endurance

Vfm

CU RATING

7

Red Storm RIS

64/128 MicroProse Price: £14.95/cass £19.99/disk

Sid Meier, the bloke who programmed *Red Storm Rising,* is no stranger to the submersible world; he gave us *Silent Service* a couple of years ago. His latest effort goes away from the World War II submarine tradition of "look through the periscope and let go both tubes" to the realm of nuclear subs, guided weapons and advanced sonar techniques. In fact, he's put us a few years into the future, into a world threatened by the outbreak of yet another World War.

As you've already guessed, this is one of those incredibly thorough and detailed MicroProse simulations that is up to the high standards set by classics like *Project: Stealth Fighter* and *Gunship.* As an extra attraction, they've linked it to Tom Clancy's bestselling novel of the same name, who gets to write the Preface: "submarine warfare is ambush, followed by evasion; a game of life and death played in three dimensions of cold, wet, unforgiving darkness". So that's how you write bestsellers.

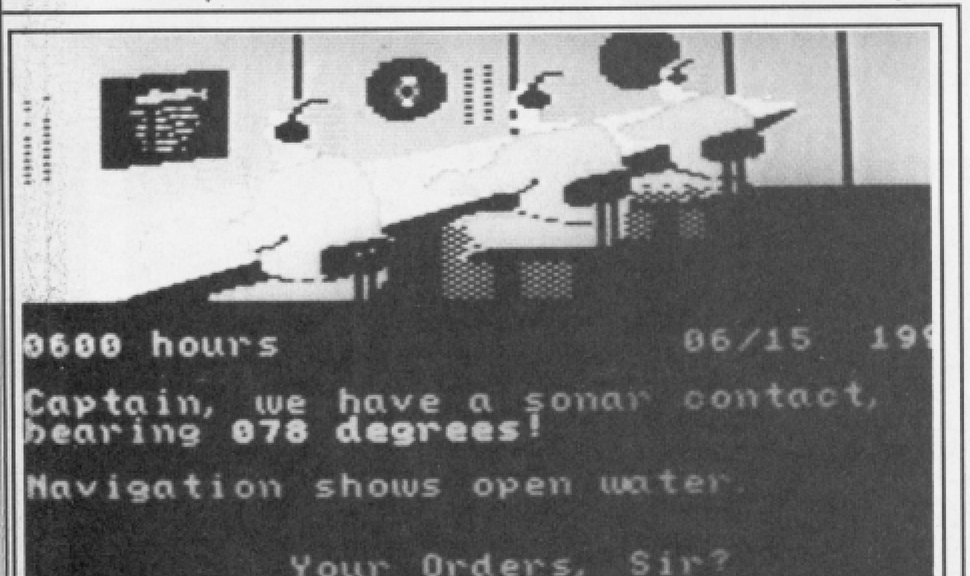
Because of the novel you get what amounts to a game within a game. Like other MicroProse simulations *Red Storm Rising* gives you a range of battle scenarios to choose from and also a range of skill levels. But once you've got bored with those, you can play the extra and 'ultimate' Red Storm Rising scenario, a full blown war against (who else?) the Russians (*America! Red Ed*). In this section of the game, you proceed through a series of High Command instructions and battles, provided you don't go down first — more about that later.

Anyway, let's get straight down into those three dimensions of cold, wet, unforgiving darkness. The object of the game is pretty straightforward. As commander of one of five different submarines, you choose one of nine different battle scenes in which to show your combat skills.

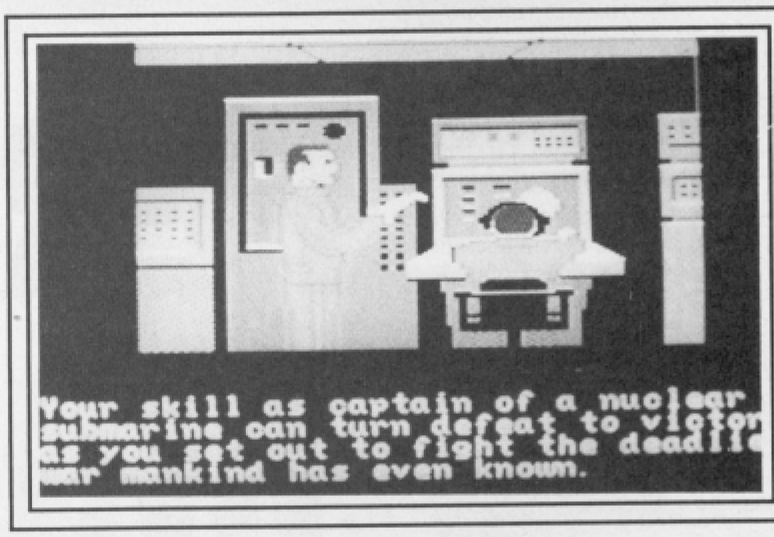
The battle scenes offer a range of situations that include both surface vessels and submarines:
The Duel: one-on-one scrap with a Russian sub.
The Cruise Missile Sub: same thing but this one might have a few 'guardian' subs hovering around.
The Wolfpack: fight a group of Russian subs using 'wolfpack' tactics.
The Boomer Bastion: you must find and destroy a Russian ballistic sub.
A Strike Group: you've intercepted a task force of surface ships. Now for that sinking feeling.
An ASW Group: you're being hunted by an anti-submarine taskforce. Get them before they get you.
A Carrier Task Force: the big one, your chance to sink a Ruskie aircraft carrier.
A Chance Engagement: one of the above situations selected randomly so that you don't know what to expect.

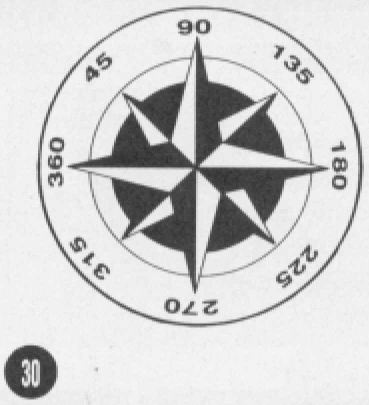
Whichever one of those battle scenes you decide to play, you choose the level of difficulty, from introductory, normal, serious or ultimate.

Run silent, run deep.



So bear that in mind.





Like most other MicroProse sims, this one allows you to get straight into the action by embarking on a couple of training missions — one against a clapped-out Russian surface vessel, the other against an equally clapped-out sub. To make things even easier, both are armed with blanks. It's at this stage that you get to learn the controls which, admittedly, look very daunting at the beginning, as does the 100-page manual.

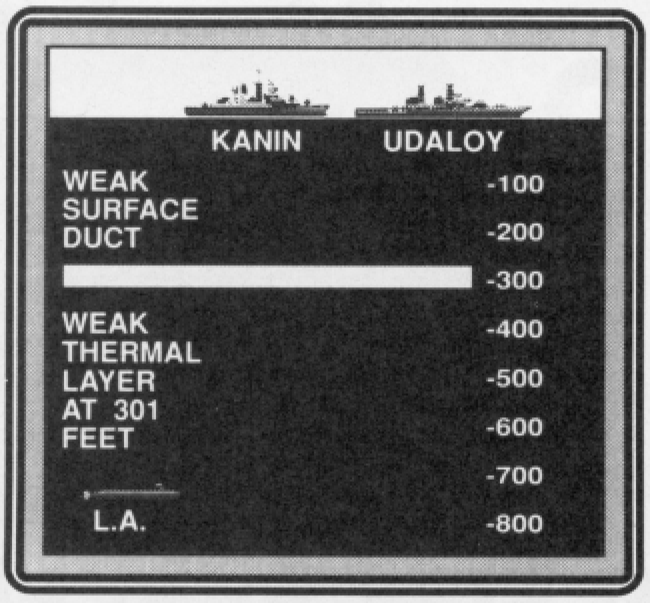
You're provided with the usual keyboard overlay which is vital because nearly all the 64's are used for some purpose or other. Each key or function is very well explained in the manual and using this in conjunction with the Help button is a nice 'n' easy way of introducing yourself to the abundant controls and weaponry. There's a Pause button too, essential for flicking through the manual for that bit of info you knew you saw somewhere.

The Help button, by the way, is described as a tactical computer which analyses the situation and then tells you what action to take. It's pretty good, too.

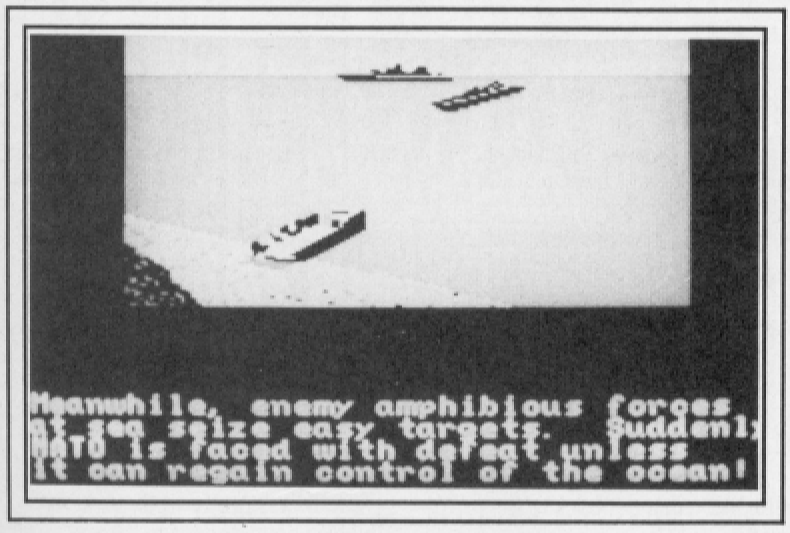
The problem with submarine sims is that, being underwater, there's really not much to see. So the programmers have added lots of optional screens to the primary Tactical Display you see for most of the time. You can zoom in and out on the map, zoom in to see weapons fired and weapons approaching, access a map overlay that shows water conditions like deep and shallow water and the ice conditions when under the Polar ice cap.

Added to that there's a whole set of screens concerned with identifying enemy vessels through their 'sonar signature' and having identified them, gaining information on their sonar and weapons capability. Go to the surface and you can look at them through the periscope.

But the major part of the game is concerned with sonar and general sensing, since you can't actually see



SING



◀ *The Russians are coming.*

anything. The whole object is to not let the enemy know you're there. For this purpose, your sub is fitted with active sonar and radar, and a number of devices, like the decoy and noisemaker, to counter weapons that are targetted towards you. Your computer tells you when an enemy vessel has been spotted and displays as much information as it can. As the vessel gets nearer or the sonar gets better, the computer identifies the vessel, its bearing and the distance away.

The booklet goes into great detail about sonar, explaining how it works and how to use it in a variety of situations. Admittedly, this involves using your loaf but is essential if you're determined to do well in the difficult levels of the game.

On the introductory level you can sink virtually anything with impunity, not bothering much with tactics. As you advance, the enemy becomes more cunning and will strike if you give yourself away by using active sonar, running your engines too loud, exposing your sonar baffles or a whole load of other things that should get you the sack back at HQ.

Firing and controlling weapons is an equally complex process and is, again, explained at length in the booklet. Some weapons, like the airborne Harpoon and Tomahawk missiles, cannot be controlled once fired. But you do have the option to control a torpedo through its trailing wire. Airborne missiles also have a minimum range and a maximum depth at which they can be fired.

It's worth pointing out here that weapons do take a long time to reach their targets and may well have to circle a bit if the enemy takes evasionary action. So don't expect fast-action blasting in this game.

On more advanced missions you have to decide which weapons to carry to suit particular conditions. In one of the Red Storm Rising scenarios, you'll need to arm yourself with land-striking Tomahawk missiles. To liven things up, MicroProse have included animated scenes for weapons firing. You can watch your sub launching a weapon and watch it strike and hopefully sink the target — or watch a missile strike you.

Finally there's control of the vessel itself. You can increase or decrease speed, change depth and set course either by entering a bearing or, in an emergency, actually take control of the rudder using the cursor keys.

A mission is completed either when your sub is knocked out, you knock out all the enemy vessels or they escape and there's no more for you to do. You're then given a performance rating, a pat on the back if deserved and even a medal if you've done very well.

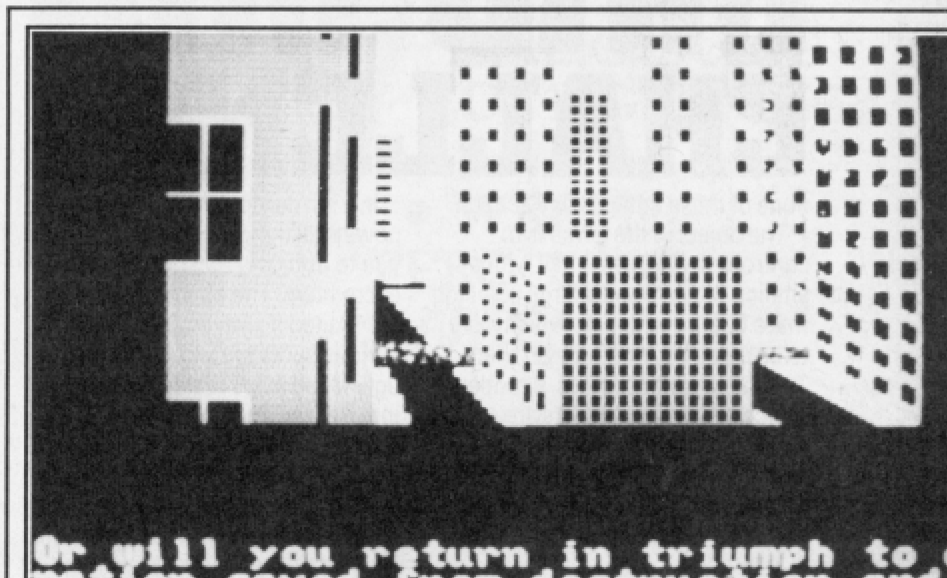
Now for the final Red Storm Rising scenario. This involves a map of the North Atlantic and a storyline which, to my mind, is somewhat inappropriate given current East-West relations. The drift of the story goes like this. Islamic fundamentalists have knocked out Russia's oil wells in Siberia, leaving it seriously short of energy supplies. In order to survive, Russia must capture the oil wells in the Gulf. It realises that NATO forces would be too strong so it sets up a diversionary war in Europe to weaken NATO forces. Before doing that it cunningly sets up a smokescreen of disarmament to put NATO off the scent whilst indulging in massive rearmament at home. All this, by the way, is told in a clever mixture of text and animated graphics.

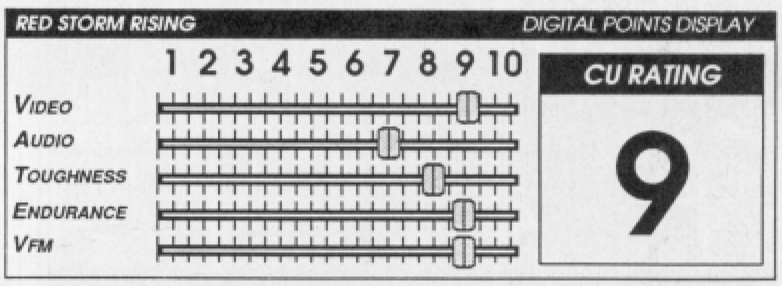
Your task is to carry out HQ mission commands, sailing round the North Atlantic to whatever spot on the map your instructions direct you. When you contact the enemy, you're back to the familiar Tactical Display and the battle commences. Only this time, you'll get another mission when this one finishes. Throughout all this, you get intermittent bulletins of what's happening in the war, and who's winning at any one stage.

It's not easy to get killed in the Red Storm Rising scenario. My sub was sunk after being hit by numerous torpedos. I'd really had my chips, I thought. Funnily enough, I found myself recovering in hospital, issued with another mission and a bronze medal into the bargain. Mind you, I had sunk a few ships before I went down.

Red Storm Rising is nothing less than a brilliant game. It's obviously well researched, superbly programmed and it packs in loads of information about modern submarine warfare. Like most MicroProse games, it can be played at whatever level you like and is not really as daunting and complicated as you first think, although it does have depth if you're prepared to look for it. It also manages to make the most out of an unpromising scenario. Let's face it, there's no speed and no fast shooting; you're just blimping around underwater. But it's pretty gripping stuff all the same. **Bohdan Buciak**

▼ *Victory might mean a ticker tape welcome.*

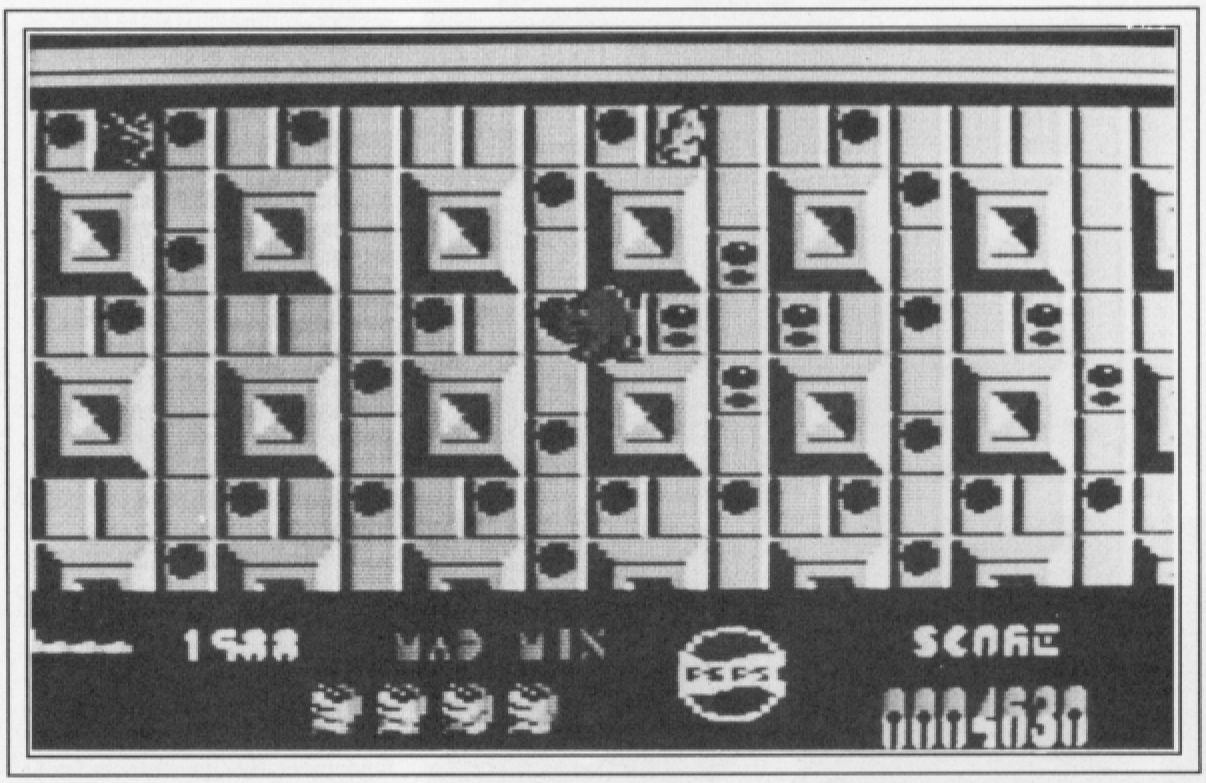




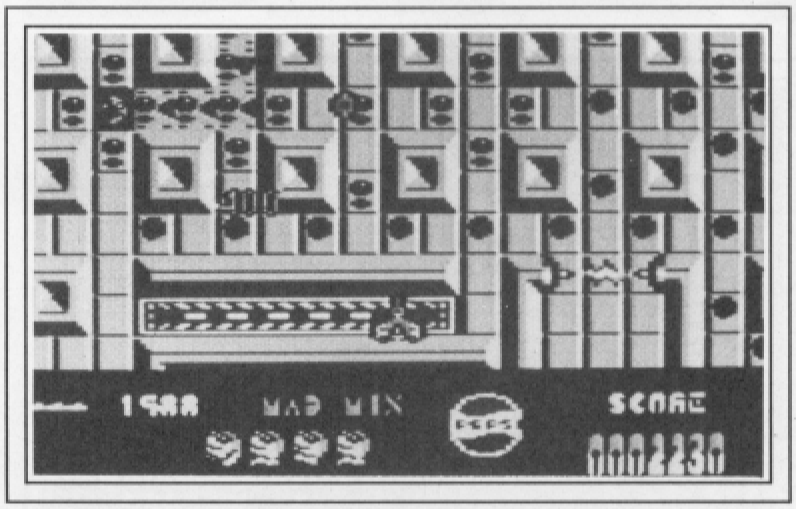
64/128
US Gold
Price:
£7.99 cass
£11.99 disk

I must admit that when US Gold announced that they were going to team up with Pepsi Cola I wasn't overly thrilled, the reason being I didn't believe that going into partnership with a company that makes fizzy drinks would result in a good game. And I was right. It hasn't.

When I read the press release for the first game in the Pepsi range, dubiously entitled *Mad Mix* I expected great things from it, as it claimed to be addictive, colourful and 'the most original computer challenge of the Century'. In fact it is



PEPSI MAD MIX CHALLENGE



none of these things. It is *Pacman*.

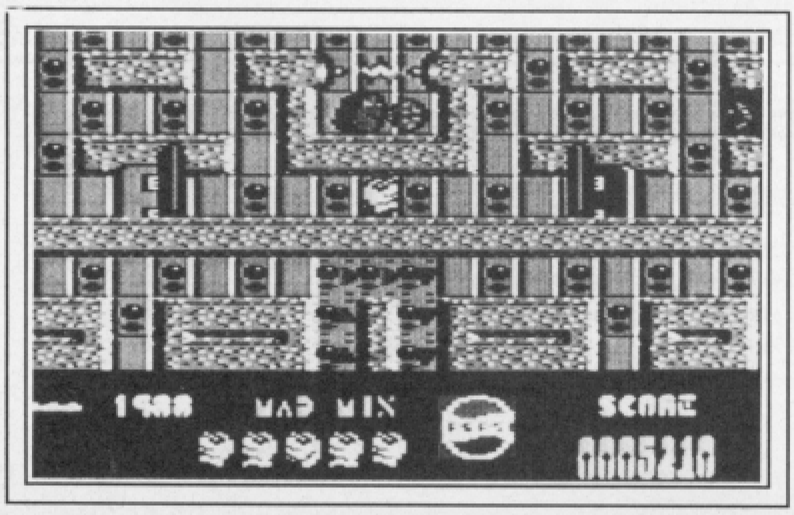
The object of the game is to control a jovial yellow ball with a smiling face around a large scrolling maze littered with dots which have to be eaten by running over them. To hinder your progress, a motley bunch of coloured ghosts are released from a chamber in the centre of the maze and begin to wander around the maze. Should you run into one of the ghosts, a life is lost.

In each corner of the maze is a power pill thingummy that enables you to duff over any ghost it encounters. The effect of these pills are limited however. Also located at various spots around the maze are ugly faced icons that turn your ball into a mean and moody pink/brown grizzly bear that also has the power to show ghosts where to get off. The problem with being a bear is that you can't collect dots so you have to wait for the bear effect to wear off before you can get back to the job in hand.

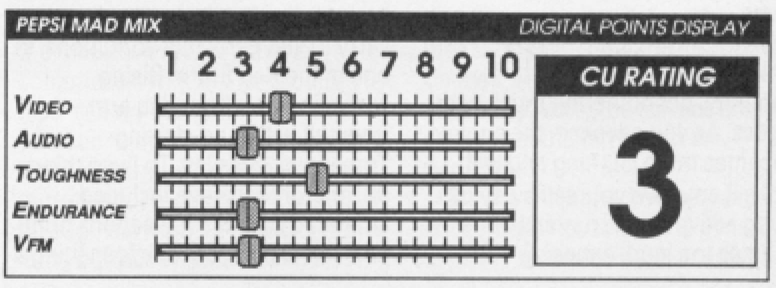
At the bottom of the maze, next to the ghost chamber is a short runway that has the odd effect of transforming your ball into a laser cannon when it passes over it. With a stab of the fire button you can now loose off a bolt of laser fire to kill any ghosts directly ahead of you. As soon as you leave the runway, you are turned back into a weedy little ball. Later levels see the arrival of extra features such as one-way doors and . . . er . . . well, that's about it really. Collecting all the dots on the screen will allow you access to the next level. Clear all 15 and . . . you probably get sent back to the beginning.

Mad Mix is pretty weak stuff. All US Gold have done is to take an age-old games concept, tart it up with a few extra features like a scrolling maze and plaster the word PEPSI all over it to make it look all hip and trendy. I wouldn't mind if the game had been any good but it isn't. Cosmetically it's very poor indeed. Minute sprites and second rate bas-relief backdrops don't impress me at all, and nor to pathetic weedy sound effects that sound like a muffled doorbell and lame title screen music. Worst of all is the completely outdated gameplay. I took the Pepsi Challenge and decided I preferred the other one.

Gary Whitta



◀ ***A pretty flat game.***



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POOLS OF RADIANCE

COMMODORE USER SUPERSTAR

64/128
SSI/US Gold/ TSR
Price: £9.99 cass £14.99 disk



Let's get straight down to business. *POR* is, without a doubt, the best RPG ever to grace the C64, or indeed any computer. It makes *Wasteland* look like a game of Draughts and is to *The Bard's Tale* series what *Vulcan Venture* is to *Scramble*. An advance far and above anything I expected.

POR is the first of SSI's role playing releases based around the Dragonlance series of books, and more specifically on the northern shore of the Moonsea in the Forgotten Realms. The storyline is that the city of Phlan, plagued with a past of invasions and wars, has been overtaken by a huge band of various types of creatures, humanoid or otherwise. The rumour is, though, that there is one controlling force, something else in charge. Who it is nobody knows and it is your destiny to find and quench the evil tyranny.

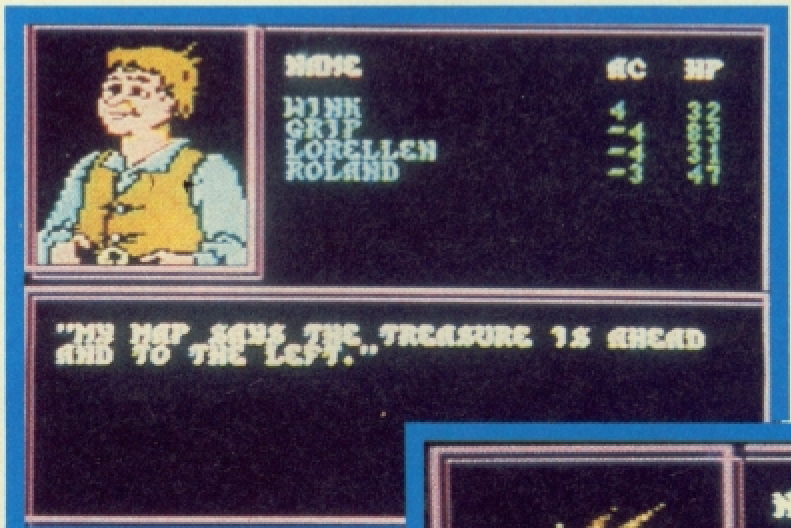
The more astute among you might have already guessed which famous set of RPG rules this is set around. That's right, the original, and still the best, AD&D. For those of you who find the thought of five thick hardback books-worth of complex rules a little daunting, I would just like to mention that all the rudimentaries of the game such as saving throws, hit ratios and combat initiative rules have been taken care of. All you have to do is move the party around, decide what to do, and tell them how to fight. No silly messing with numbers, this is simple, easy to use RPG. For people like me, who have played D&D for a substantial part of their lifetime, or indeed just like the game and are worried how it has translated, worry no more. SSI have managed to capture 90% of the feel of true D&D. There is no feasible way, of course, that a C64 could even come close to capturing the atmosphere generated by an intelligent and descriptive DM.

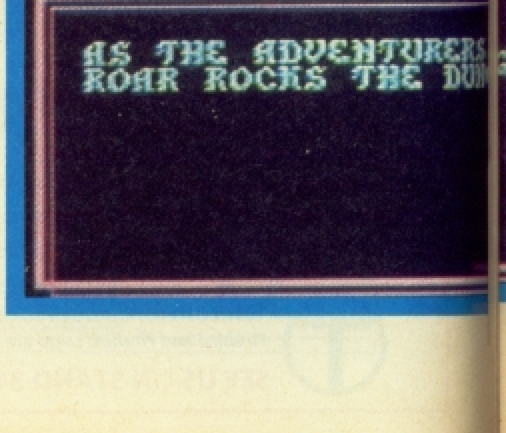
What they have managed to pack onto four double sided disks (Yes, FOUR! That's eight disk sides of monsters, dungeons, treasure and taverns — you'd be surprised by the amount of taverns there are in D&D, kid) is lots of colourful character and enemy graphics, three different views, a Chaos-like combat sequence and a character who looks surprisingly like Kenny Rogers. If you don't believe me, check the screenshots on the packaging. Still, let's begin at the beginning.

The first thing you have to do upon booting is get a party together. After going through the usual menu system of choosing race, class and occupation, you are presented with six statistics showing various aspects about the person's character, such as Charisma, Intelligence and Dexterity, each ranging from 3 to 18 (3d6). Once you're happy with the statistics of your character (a magician is going to need a high intelligence, a thief will need dexterity etc), you are given the chance to define your character's portrait. Choose from a range of exciting and colourful heads and bodies from the disk library, stick them together and save them to your previously prepared Saved Game disk. It's only then that you get to define your battle icon. You can change the colours of the clothing, the size, the weapon, even the colour of the hair, just to make combat look more interesting.

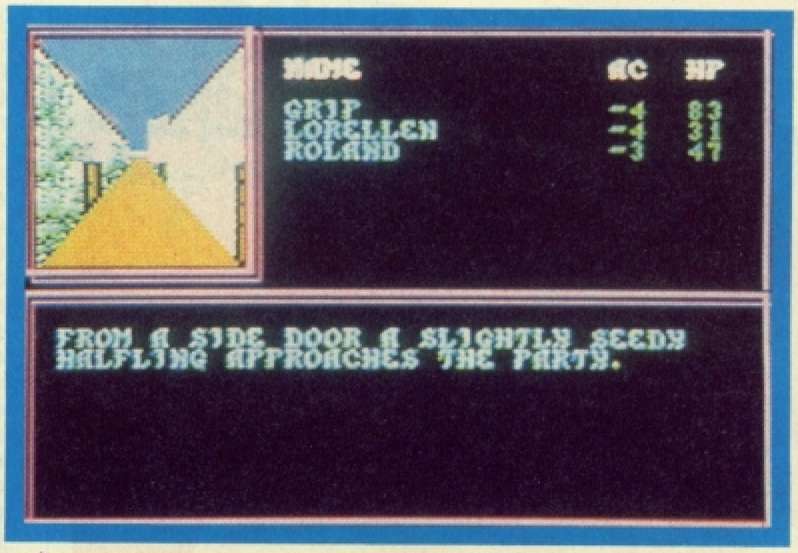
Once you've got your party out into the big bad world, it's down to brass tacks. Viewed in a similar way as the *Bard's Tale* series, when in a city or town that is, you are presented with a 3-D view of the way ahead, with the same kind of control method as *BT* (Rotate left/right and walk forward). Graphically, this bit is far better than *BT* and indeed a lot of other games, such as PSS' *Swords and Sorcery*. Whereas everywhere looked the same in *BT*, there is an

Get by with a little help from your friends.

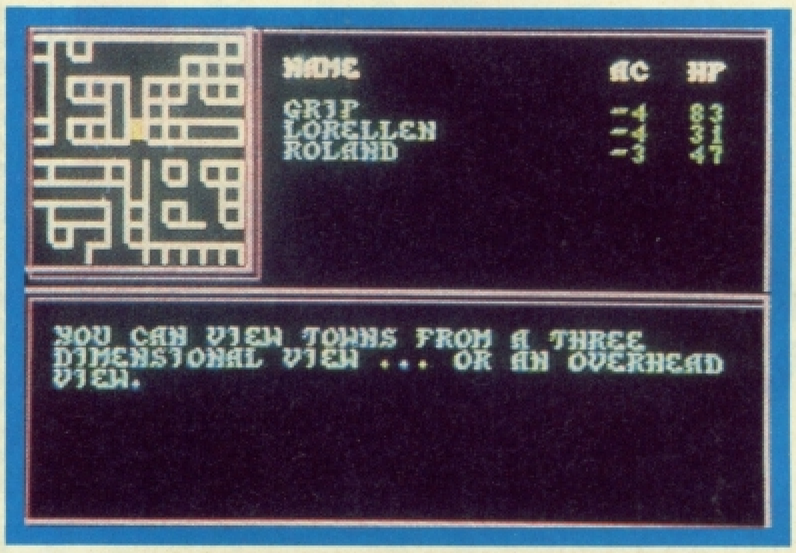






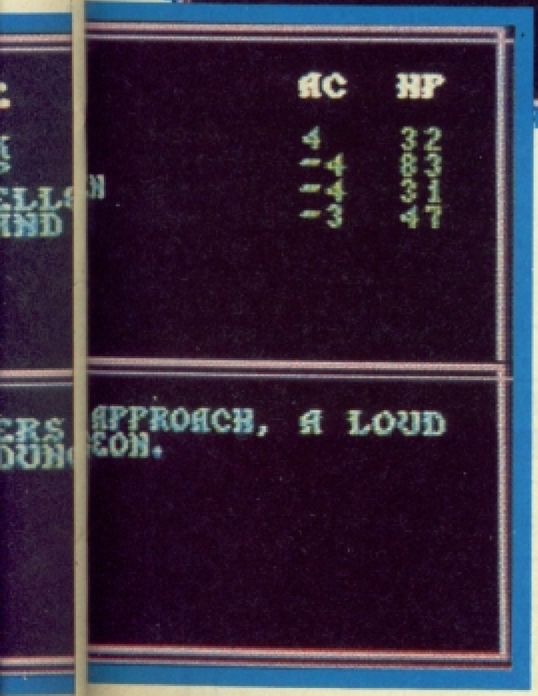


Hello shrimp.



When in trouble consult the map.





Make her an offer she can't refuse.

Looks like trouble.

incredible amount of variation in *POR*. Moss clings to some walls. Some lights are lit and some aren't. Keep walking in the right direction and you'll come to the Moonsea, and scattered about are lots of important buildings. The Town Hall, for example, displays proclamations and offers work to any passing mercenaries/adventurers. The training hall offers you character advancement, provided you have the experience points and the cash.

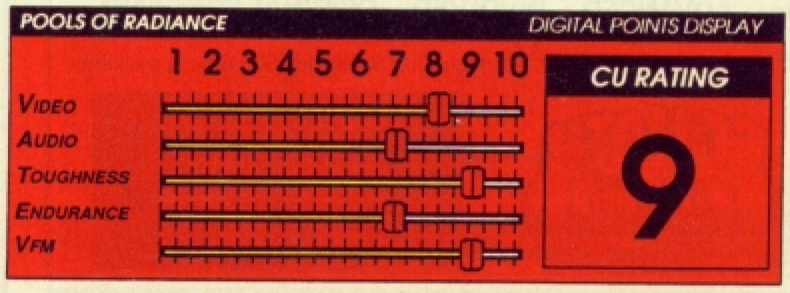
The temples offer healing, and the various shops and taverns can provide a wealth of information as well as just the usual wares.

Once inside a city the view changes from a 3D view to an overhead *Questron*-type landscape, pockmarked with mountains and various remote places of interest. The other view is the map view, which can be called up from the menu bar at the bottom of the screen. It's from this bar that you do all your stuff, including things like manipulation of items, spell casting and memorisation, setting up of camp, viewing of characters as well as all the combat commands. Combat consists of a large overhead view of the room you are currently in, with pictures of your party and the enemy in their relative positions.

As you choose an action from the menu, you see a small animated sequence showing you what you've done. For example, choose to hack at a Kobold with your sword, and you'll see the little icon swing with all its might. Choose to fire an arrow, and you see the arrow fly at the enemy, accompanied by a twanging sound effect.

Pools of Radiance is everything an RPG-er could wish for, and I can see it appealing to persons not of a pixie-bashing nature too. Unfortunately the disk access is a little slower than it could have been, but any game that has me playing for nine hours into the wee hours of the morning has to have something going for it.

Tony Dillor





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4 x 4

OFF ROAD RACING

4 *x 4* is really a pretty ordinary racing game with a few extra bits bolted on to spice things up. The extra bits amount to a choice of four terrains and four vehicles, with the ability to customise your vehicle to suit the conditions.

The terrains look pretty much the same. The sand in the Baja desert is cunningly disguised as snow in Michigan, whilst the desert cacti do a good job of looking like fir trees.

Like the scenery there is a choice of four trucks: two American, one Japanese and one British model. A list of specifications is given for each truck to help you choose one that's best for a particular terrain.

From there, you mosey down to the Custom shop and the Automart to do the necessary customising. This is where you buy spare tyres, a winch, extra petrol and a canopy. The Automart supplies more basic stuff like oil, water a toolkit and even a mechanic.

Why a mechanic? Because when you need to do repairs, this bloke will get you going quickly. But you pay the price of going more slowly due to the extra passenger.

You start as the last man in a 17-man race. You see the standard view of the back of the truck with the road scrolling towards you. Joystick control is very basic, simply press the firebutton to accelerate, push back to slow down and forward to brake quickly.

Catching a rock or tree trunk with just two wheels results in a wheelie for a few yards. Smacking into obstacles headlong makes the truck take off *Buggy Boy* style, do a few somersaults and land again with apparently no harm done.

The only really worthwhile meanie on the road is the Doombuggy, which sounds its horn at you from behind and tries to push you off the road.

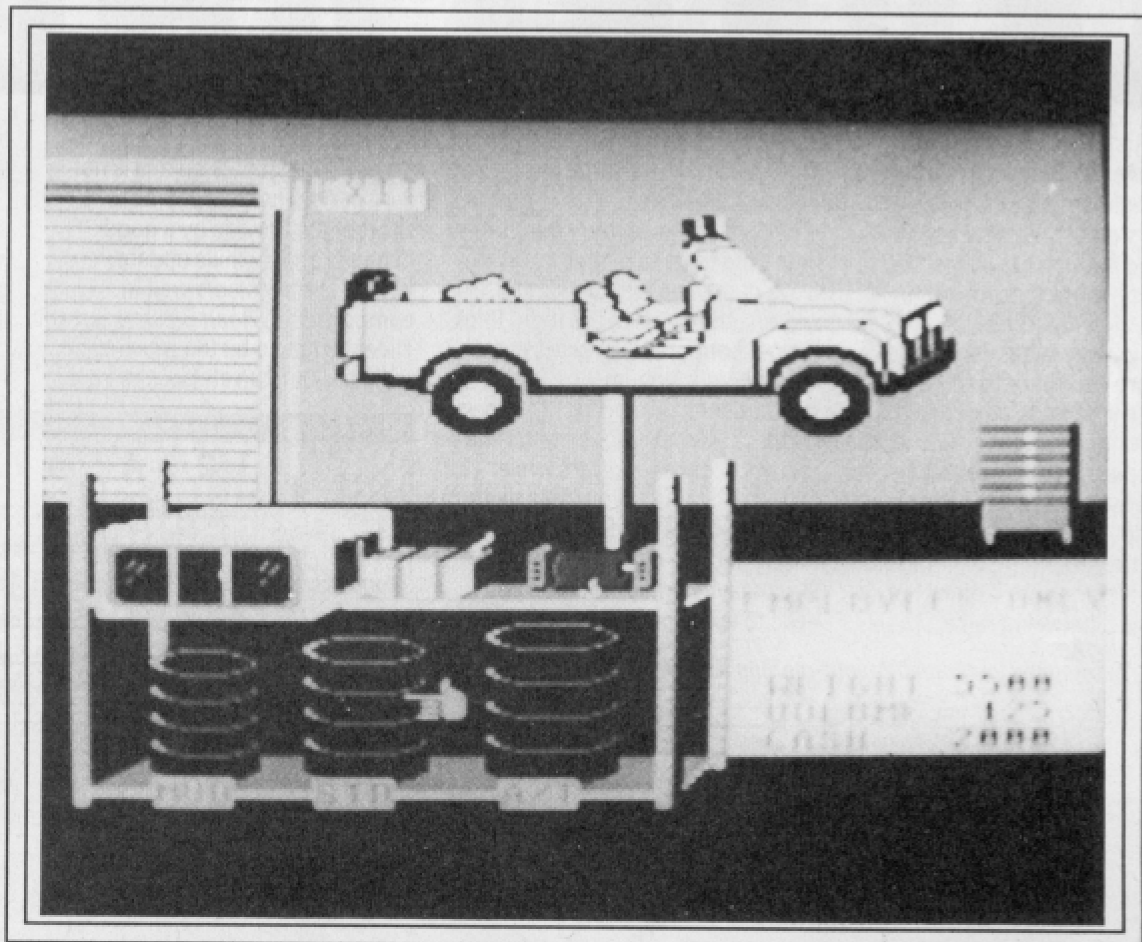
At the bottom of the screen you find speedo, rev counter and a load of warning lights for various bits of the car. The lights turn blue for medium damage and yellow when things are looking serious.

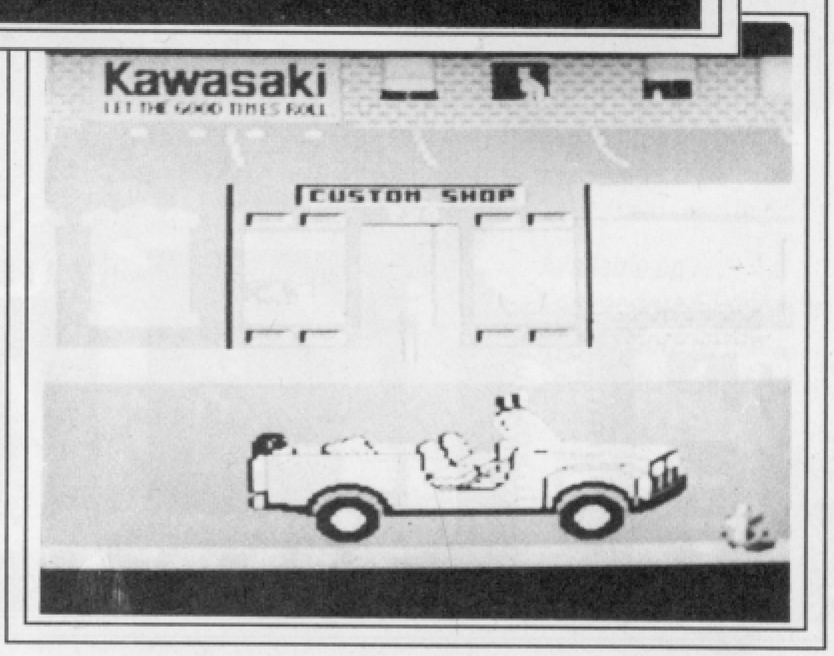
Each race starts at 8am with checkpoints every two and half hours. A checkpoint is a compulsory stop at which you can do repairs if you want. A damage screen is displayed showing just what needs fixing, and will appear at any point in the game at which sustained damage is too great to carry on.

Here, you must do repairs before carrying on — providing you're carrying the necessary spares.

So you race on into the Michigan/ Death Valley/Georgia sunset until you either win or finish amongst the runners, in which case you'll see a score screen showing your placement and race timing. Winning all four terrains gets you King of the Road status.

64/128
Epyx
Price:
£9.99 cass
£11.99 disk





4 x 4 is a competent game with average graphics and a reasonably good racing section. But it's simply not varied enough and its gives me the annoying impression that they couldn't be bothered to make it into something special.

Bohdan Buciak

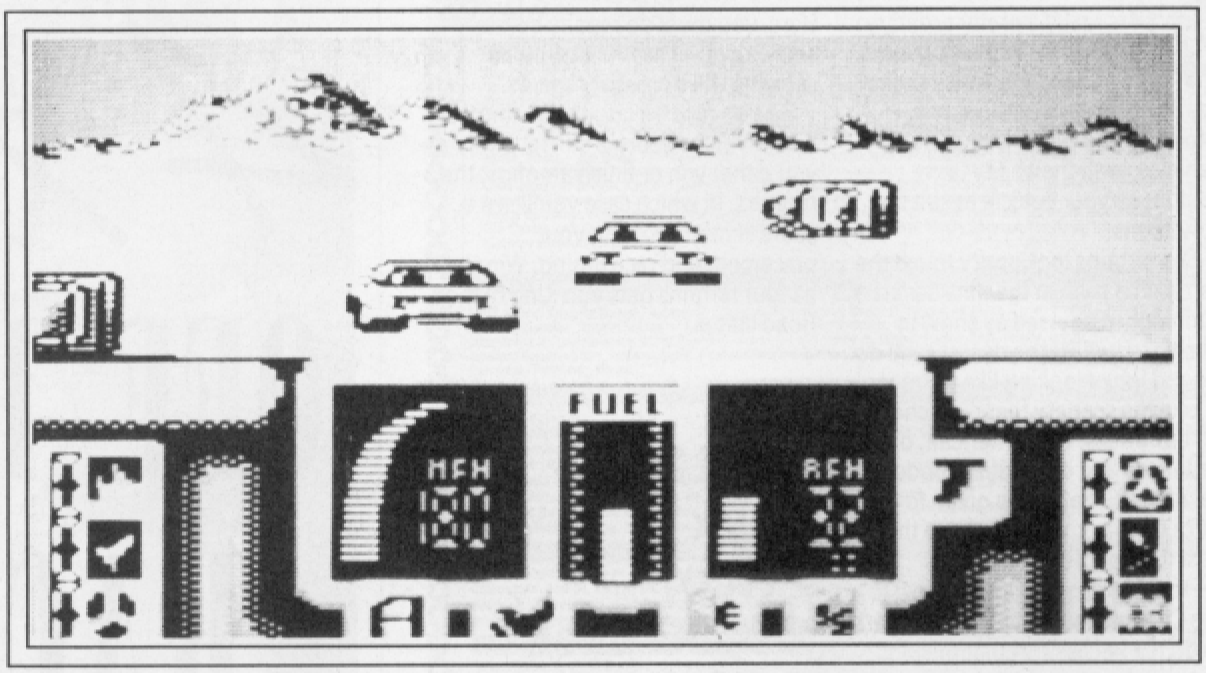
4 x 4 OFF ROAD RACING — *DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY*

	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Video	
Audio	
Toughness	
Endurance	
VFM	

CU RATING

6

64/128
Elite
Price:
£9.99 cass



OVERLANDER

In 2025 the destruction of the ozone layer has finally come about, providing some nice chunky post holocaust plots for a computer game. The only means of transport between cities is via the old freeways, now controlled by roving gangs of anarchic rebels. The only people foolhardy enough to attempt to traverse the roadways are the overlanders — providing the price is right.

At the start of the game you are given two missions to choose from, one paying more than the other because of its greater difficulty. Half the mission pay is handed over to you before you set out in order to buy those little extras that make a journey safer. Fuel, of course, tops the shopping list and eats the largest portion of your cash. Money can now be spent turning your already hot car into something that makes Knight Rider look like a dinky toy. Turbo units, battering rams, wheel blades, rockets and flamethrowers are but a few of the large amount of items available.

Each of the unsavoury gangs who haunt the road have their very own ways of dealing with unwanted visitors, the Kamikazees (ugh) think it most honourable to commit hari kiri with your bonnet. The Road Hogs do their damndest to force you off the road and Crawlers litter the rout with fences and cars while taking pot shots at your vehicle from the sides of the road. At the end of every road the *Offroaders* wait in their heavily armed vehicle. You have to wipe them out to complete the level.

As driving games go this is not very good. The road seems to fall short of the horizon by a good distance and the hills update very jerkily. The car steers well in comparison to *Road Blasters* but still slides around a bit too much to be realistic. Gun turrets pose the only real threat but it's severe enough to strip you of your remaining lives.

Overlander is the best of the drive-a-long shoot 'em ups but still fails to make the major league. A few graphical enhancements in the road layout and cars would have made this far superior to what it is now.

Mark Patterson

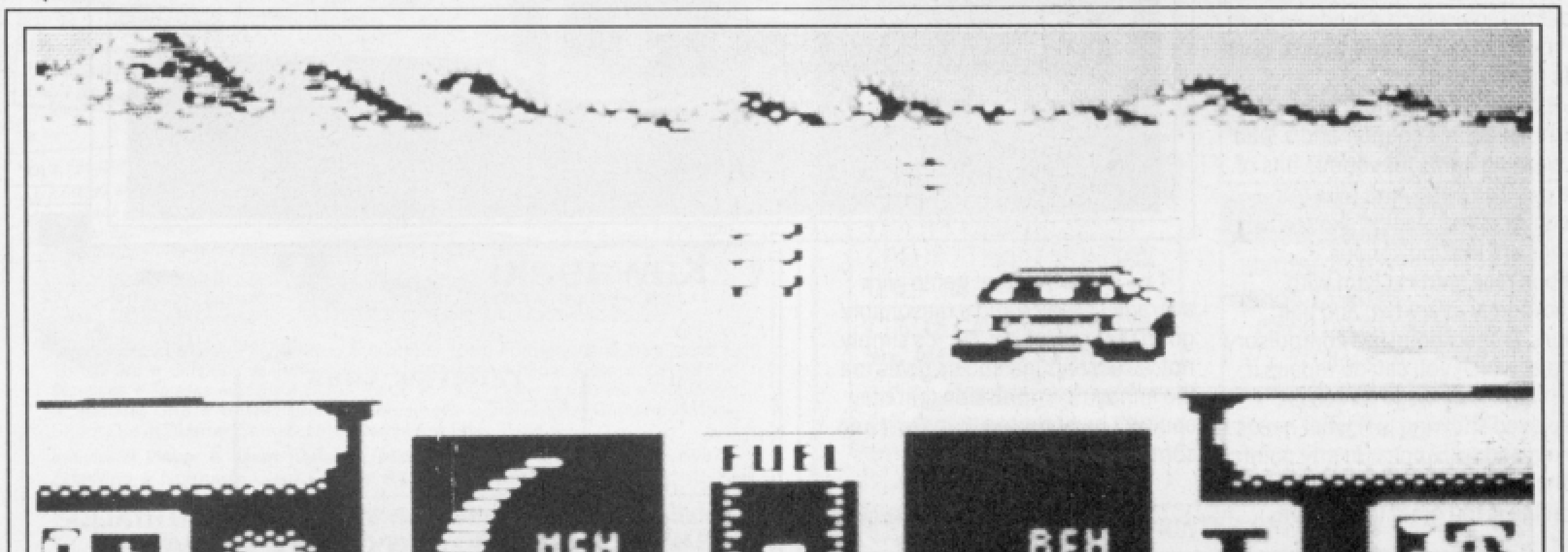
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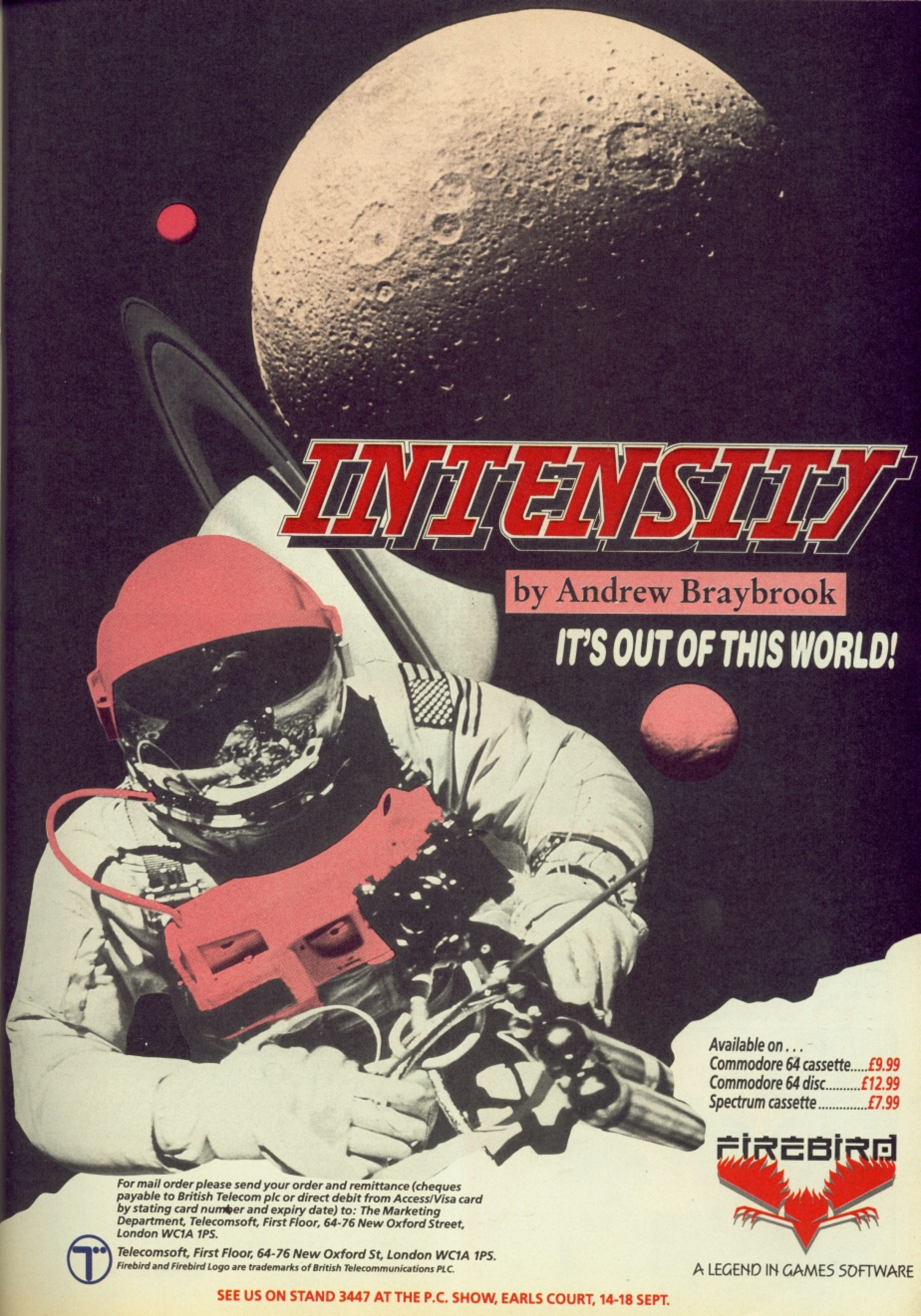
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Audio					■					
Toughness							■			
Endurance					■					
VFM					■					

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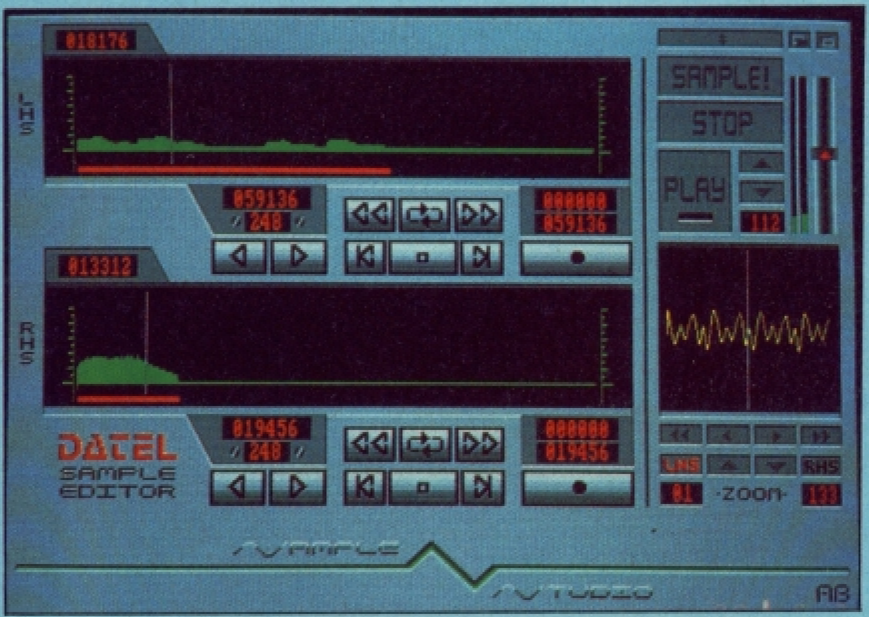
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▼ **Overlander:** ***roadblasting, out-running action.***




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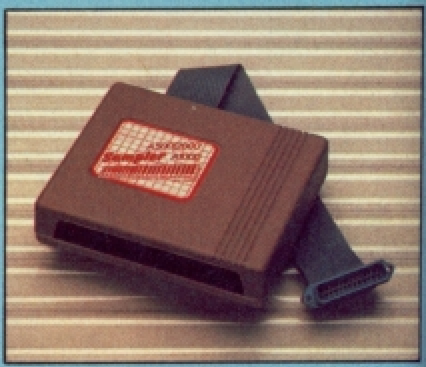
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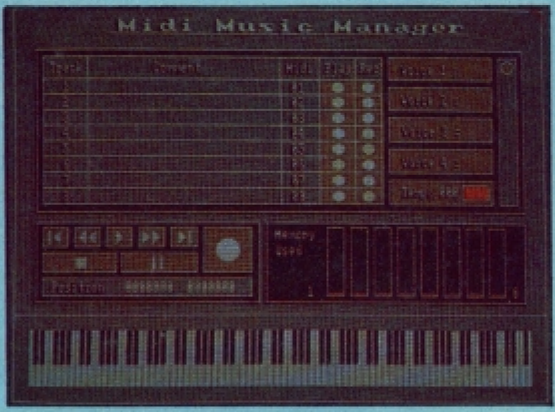
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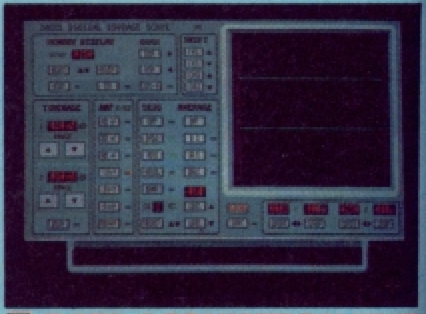
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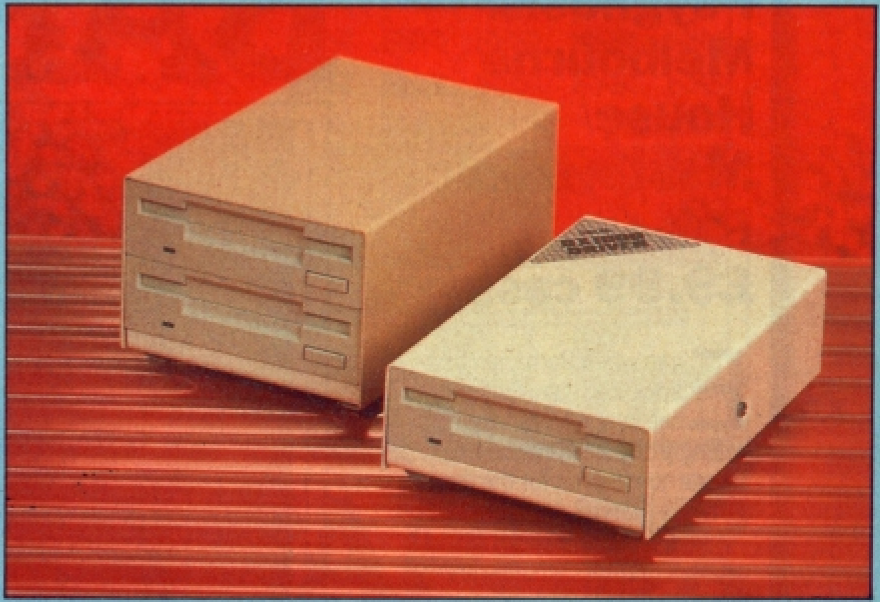
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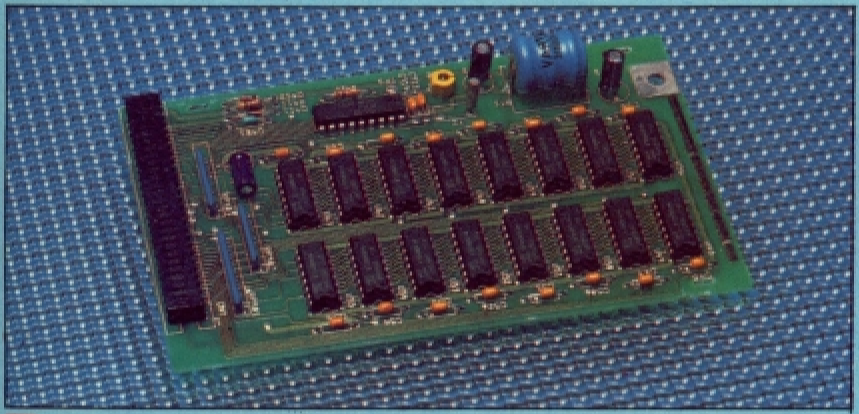
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BARBARIAN

64/128
Psygnosis/ Melbourne House/ Mastertronic
Price: £9.99 cass

Even when Barbarian first appeared it was difficult to see why anyone would *willingly* buy a run-of-the-mill arcade quest, even for the then software-starved Amiga.

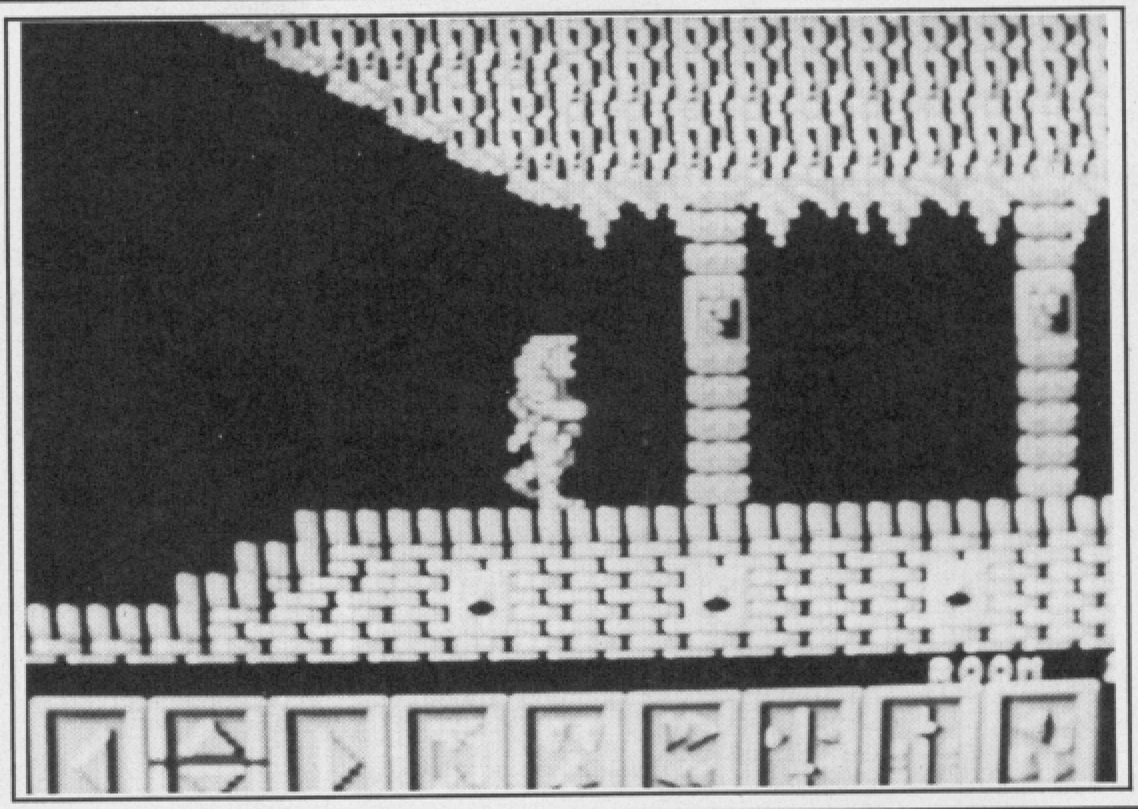
A year later, and shorn of the detailed graphics which were its main attraction, *Barbarian* on the 64 now looks so totally mediocre it's surprising that Mastertronic haven't released it as part of their budget range.

Armed with colossal biceps, sword and long-bow, Hegor descends into the bowels of the earth and the depths of cliché on a quest to destroy the evil Necron. For only then will the land be free of the fear and terror that has plagued its villages, ravaged its crops etc, etc.

This rubbish might sound original to novice Amiga owners, but us loyal 64 users have had it up to *here* with moronic axe-wielding psychopaths. The only way this kind of stuff gets tolerated is if there's some sufficiently novel twist which makes gameplay a new experience.

But the only unusual feature in *Barbarian* is an unnecessary and clumsy icon-control system. Displayed beneath the screen, and accessed by a joystick or keyboard-controlled cursor, it gives options for running, walking, jumping, somersaulting, fighting, changing direction, picking up objects, climbing and selecting weaponry. As nearly all of these actions could be directly controlled by the joystick — as they are in almost all other games of this ilk — then Psygnosis must have only one reason for choosing this perverse control method: without it the game would be too goddam easy.

Gameplay boils down to ambling along corridors and climbing up and down ladders, collecting weaponry and killing the one-legged gremlins, ogres and monsters before they kill you. And all the most infuriating characteristics of the genre have been included: dead monsters which are resurrected as soon as you re-enter a room, booby-traps which can't be foreseen or avoided,



Watch out for falling rocks musclebrain.

KELLOGG'S TOUR

64/128
CRL
Price: £9.95 cass
£14.95 disk

Cycling is a sport with a very high SB — or Sore Bot — rating, although not quite as high as bronko busting or tobogganing in your boxer shorts. The Kellogg's Tour of Britain cycle race has less SB than the Tour de France because it's only about half the distance. It also has much less charisma since not many pro cyclists actually dream of ever winning it.

Anyway, CRL's version of the Kellogg's Tour has a high SW — or Sore Wrist — rating, owing to the fact that it's one of those joystick waggling games that we hoped would never reappear.

The game, described as 'official' is a faithful rendering of the race which, as we all know, finished several weeks ago and nobody remembers the winner. It has six stages beginning in Newcastle, passing through York, Manchester, Liverpool, Stoke, Birmingham and Bristol, and finishing on London's Westminster Bridge. Throughout the stages there are various sprint sections on which you can win time points which are automatically deducted from your final time.

You start the race in 67th position, the object being to work your way up through the 'peloton' as you progress through the six stages. Just like the real thing various vests are up for grabs. Reach the top of a climb first and you're awarded the King of the Mountains jersey. Winning a TV sprint gets you the white one. Win a stage and you get the covetted yellow jersey.

Now for the cycling bit. As you've already grasped, waggling the joystick from side to side makes you go quicker. You also have a choice of two (only two) gears: high gear for the slopes and low for the straights — not too taxing for the brain, that. Apart from that, you must take food at regular intervals to retain your stamina.

All that lot is cleverly displayed as a row of icons at the bottom of the screen. Food is depicted as a bottle which gradually empties, whilst the slopes are upward or downward gradients. It's a good idea to keep an eye on this so that you can change to the appropriate gear in good time. The only other hazards are the other cyclists who lose you speed if they bump into you or you into them.

Graphically the scenery is rather impoverished and repeats itself for each of the stages. You start on a street scene, move out into open country, and then finish the stage on yet another street scene. You don't even get an idea of uphill or downhill sections — it all looks perfectly flat.

Fortunately, the cyclists are better defined. They're large and their legs pedal realistically, quickly in high gear and less quick in low. They've all got that nice crouching action too.

A nice touch is that you get a map of Britain at the end of each stage showing the course completed as a solid line and the next section as a flashing line.

Another nice touch is the 'position in race' indicator at the left of the screen. You can actually watch it go down as you overtake a cyclist.

Kellogg's Tour is a generally well designed and well presented game but it loses out drastically on gameplay. It's all too simple and there's nothing really to do except waggle away at the joystick. But that sums up cycling. It's not much fun unless you're actually doing it. Over to you Pedro.

Bohdan Buciak

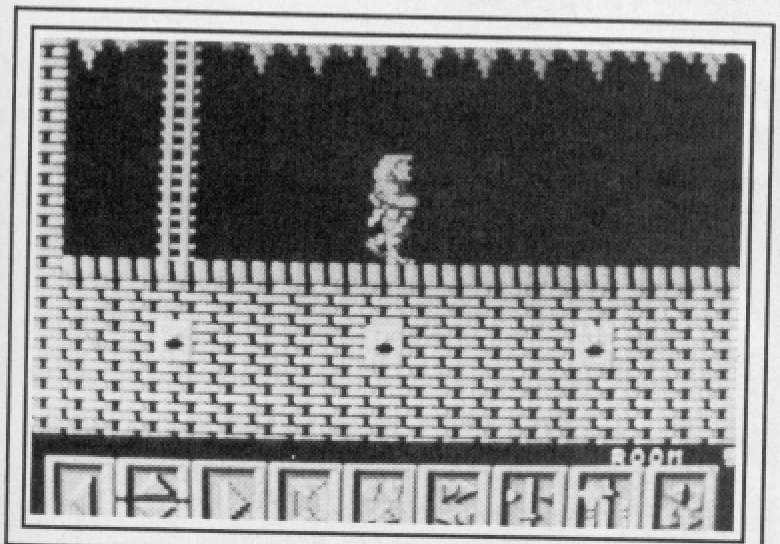
and, of course, the conspicuous absence of a Save-Game option.

The graphics are nothing to write home about, and the animation is restricted (especially that of the various nasties). And somewhat surprisingly, considering this is 1988 and not the middle ages, there's no horizontal scrolling. I'd forgotten just how irritating flip-screen games were.

Worst of all are the sound effects — or rather the almost total lack of them. Except for the odd unsuitable whoosh when Hegor rubs out an enemy, and the occasional rumbling noise — either a distant dragon or else the plot creaking — there's no sound at all. Even massive rocks come crashing to the floor in complete silence.

Still, there is one good thing about Barbarian — and that's the nifty little loading game by Aplin and Hubbard. This is pure Space Invaders accompanied by some frenzied music, and takes you back to those days when playing computer games was fun.

Bill Scolding



BARBARIAN — DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Video
Audio
Toughness
Endurance
Vfm

CU RATING

3

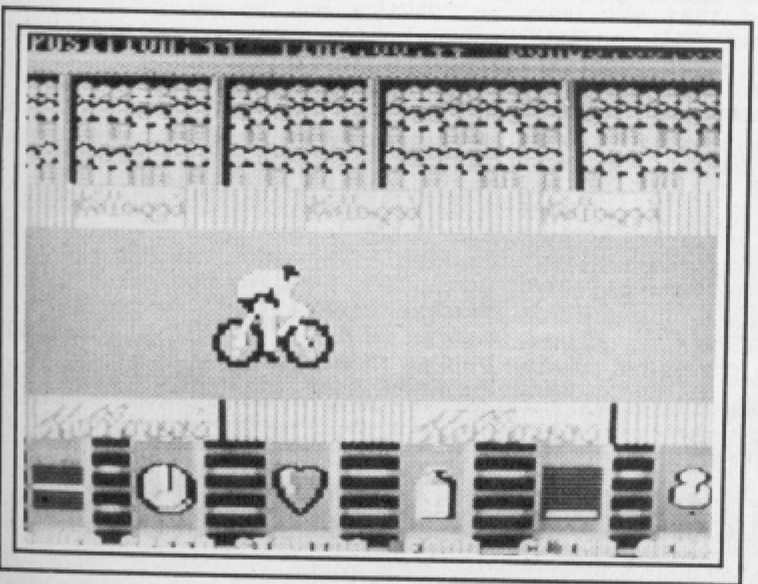
KELLOGG'S TOUR — DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY

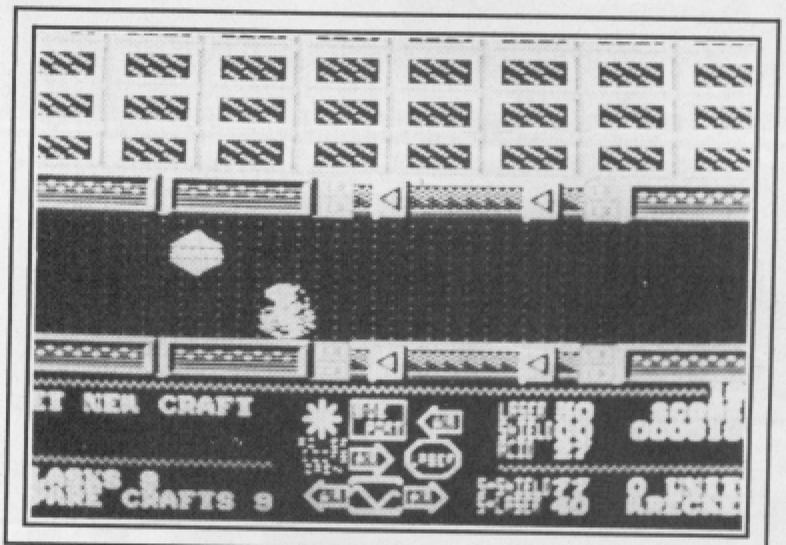
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Video
Audio
Toughness
Endurance
Vfm

CU RATING

5





METAPLEX

64/128
Addictive
Price:
£2.99 cass

This game has got great instructions. How many times have you studied that tiny sliver of paper under the magnifying glass for a good half-hour only to discover that it seems to describe a game altogether different from the one you have just booted up?

None of that with *Metaplex*. A demo goes through the game telling you what you have to do, showing what a teleporter, spare vehicle, acid tank and so on look like so there's little chance of the kind of infuriating cock-up that's likely to end up with the joystick stuck to the forehead of the nearest passer-by.

Metaplex is a metal labyrinth, home of the horrible Garth. Garth is twice as ugly as he might be on account of having two heads. The general consensus is that life would be a whole lot better without Garth around and guess who gets the short straw.

Destroying Garth, as you would imagine, is not simply a question of finding him and hitting him on the head with a blunt instrument. Garth's power comes from four power points located in very difficult to get to places around the maze. To weaken Garth before finishing him off, you must first locate the power points and destroy them — pulling out the plug simply isn't good enough.

These power points, being of a particularly sophisticated high-tech design, can only be destroyed by a liberal dousing with acid, and the acid can only be obtained from particularly difficult to reach spots within the labyrinth.

The task then, in short, is to find a flask, fill it with acid, pour it on the power point, do the same four times, gq get Garth, then get out. You have limited time to achieve all this.

You scoot about in this thing that looks like a cross between a pram and Sinclair C5 and frequently find your path blocked by number coded doors, wind tunnels and other obstacles. These can be overcome by using these switcheroo thingies which you can find, surprisingly enough, quite easily. By sitting on them and pressing the fire button you can select from a 3x3 matrix of goodies on the control panel. This offers you super shields, super lasers, unlock doors, neutralizes wind (pardon me) and all sort of other helpful things.

I dunno whether it's addictive; it kept my attention for a couple of hours, but I wasn't overcome by compulsion to go on all night. *Metaplex* is certainly cleverly thought out and interesting, but it's let down a bit by the crude graphics. Garth himself is particularly on the leggo-like side and the scoot about vehicles, though they scroll well, don't have any of the realism of 'gravity'.

Ken McMahon

METAPLEX — DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Video
Audio
Toughness
Endurance
Vfm

CU RATING

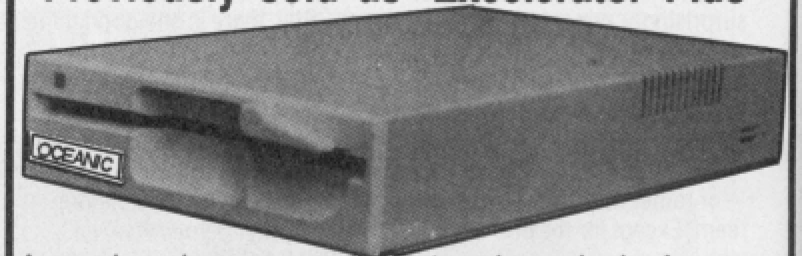
7

Evesham Micros

All prices include VAT/delivery

OCEANIC OC-118

Previously sold as 'Excelerator Plus'



A superb package representing extremely good value for money, combining the Oceanic OC-118 disk drive (previously sold as 'Excelerator+') and the sophisticated GEOS system. Said by COMPUTE's Gazette to have "dramatic improvements over the 1541 in quality and reliability", the drive is a stylish and attractive compact unit featuring a direct drive motor and its own external power supply. GEOS brings the power of a graphic interface and integrated disk turbo to your '64 and includes geoPAINT, a graphic workshop, geoWRITE, a WYSIWIG word processor and many Desk Accessories. Many more extensions available - see below.

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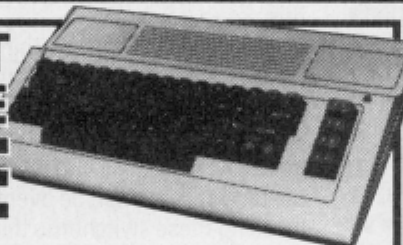
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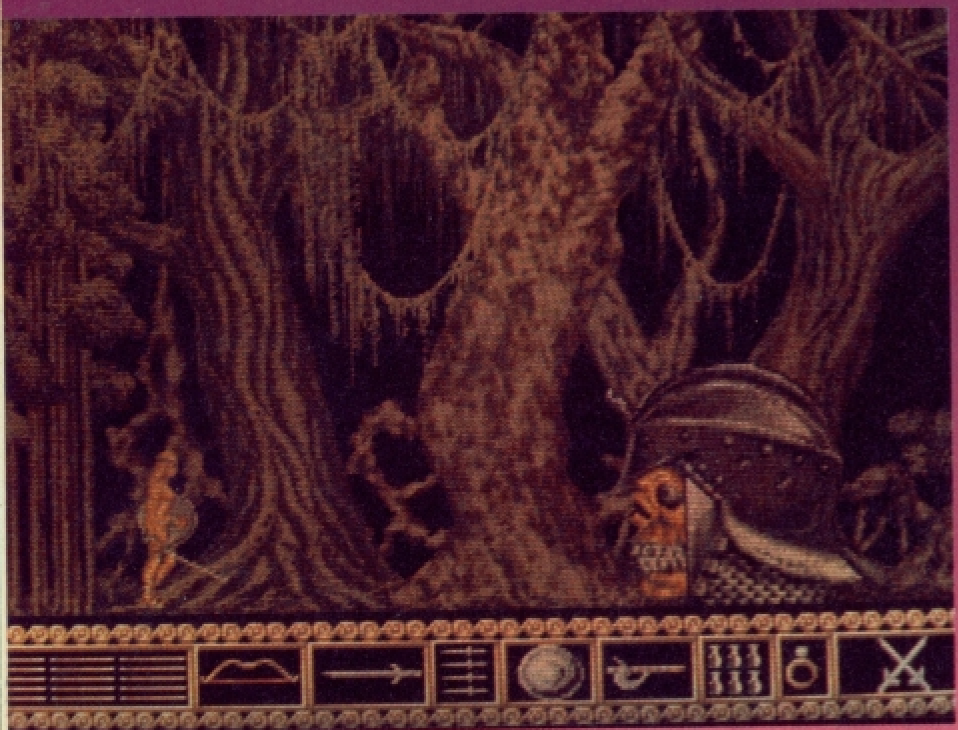
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CARRIER COMMAND TIPPED



DRAGON SLAYER

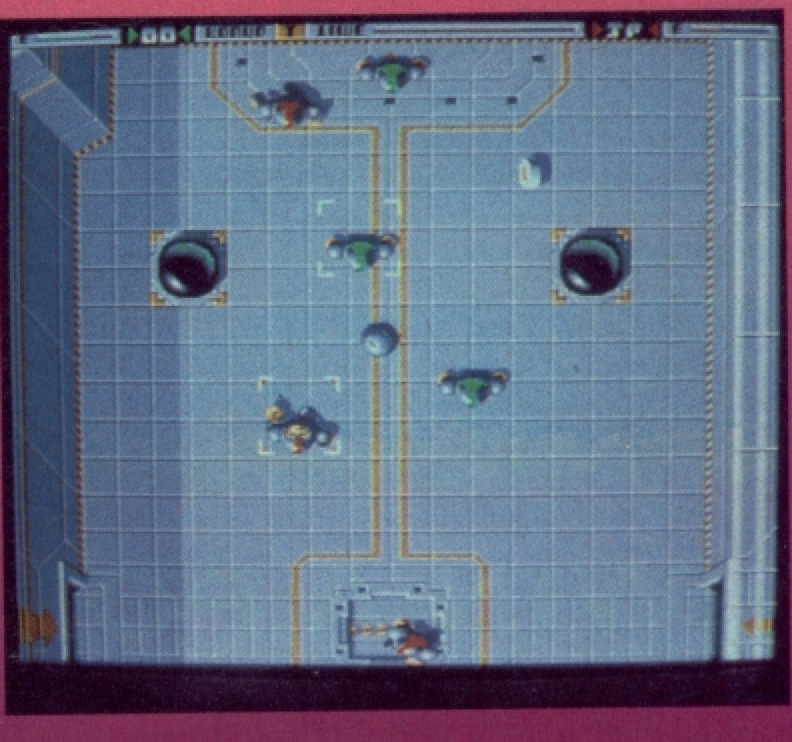
Coming your way this side of the festive season is *Dragonslayer* from Swiss softhouse Linel, in which you play an adventurer charged with the task of defeating an evil dragon. This beast and his cohorts have taken over your once-idyllic land. Unless you can retrieve all the pieces of the ancient medallion which belonged to a powerful sorcerer, you'll never be able to locate the dragon's lair. And unless you find him, you're hardly going to be able to fight him to the death. And if you don't fight him to the death, well, the tragic inhabitants will have to keep on sacrificing their virgins to the monster. Described, perhaps inevitably, as a 'state-of-the-art arcade adventure', *Dragonslayer* will take you through many beautifully-drawn locations and past massive half-screen high sprites before your showdown in a 300 room castle.

FUTURE AMIGA PREV



SPEEDBALL

The Bitmap Brothers' first game, *Xenon*, was one of the major Amiga hits of the last twelve months, even being featured on TV's Get Fresh. Now signed up by Image Works, it'll be interesting to see whether their second, *Speedball*, can do similarly well for them. Featuring more of the Bitmap's unmistakable metallic graphics, *Speedball* is a futuristic sport viewed from overhead in which, as well as tackling and scoring in a vaguely football-esque fashion, you also get the opportunity to blow the opposition away if you're sufficiently nippy. With power-up tokens, brill graphics and mega sound this looks like a good tip for pre-Christmas honours.



INTERNATIONAL KARATE +

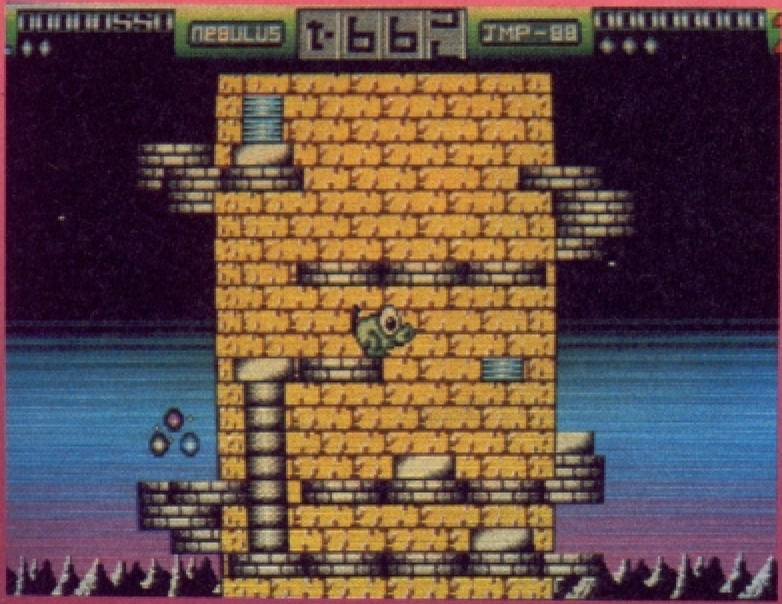
The follow-up to *International Karate*, *IK+* promises to be even more nifty than its much-admired predecessor. Programmed by Archer Maclean (the man responsible for the *IK* series on the 64), and due for release on Activision this month, *IK+* stars all 14 different moves from the original beat 'em up plus three brand new ones — a spine-bending backflip, the decidedly un-Queensbury Rules headbutt and the double head kick. There are two opponents to be taken on simultaneously, one or both of 'em under the computer's control, ball-dodging bonus phases and any amount of neat graphic and sound touches to be savoured. And, of course, cheeky schoolboy types can always press T and watch the fighters' trousers fall around their ankles . . .



MANHATTAN DEALERS

Fresh from new faces Silmarils, *Manhattan Dealers* drops you into the middle of the Big Apple to fight for your life. Quite why such an array of nasties should be so interested in beating the stuffing out of little you isn't totally clear, but you'll encounter gang fighters in Harlem, butch women thugs in Devil's Kitchen, skinheads with chainsaws in the Bronx and an array of oriental triad members in Chinatown. This 3-D beat 'em up should be available real soon, and remember, as the song says, if you can make it there, you can make it anywhere.

E SHOCK
VIEW AMIGA



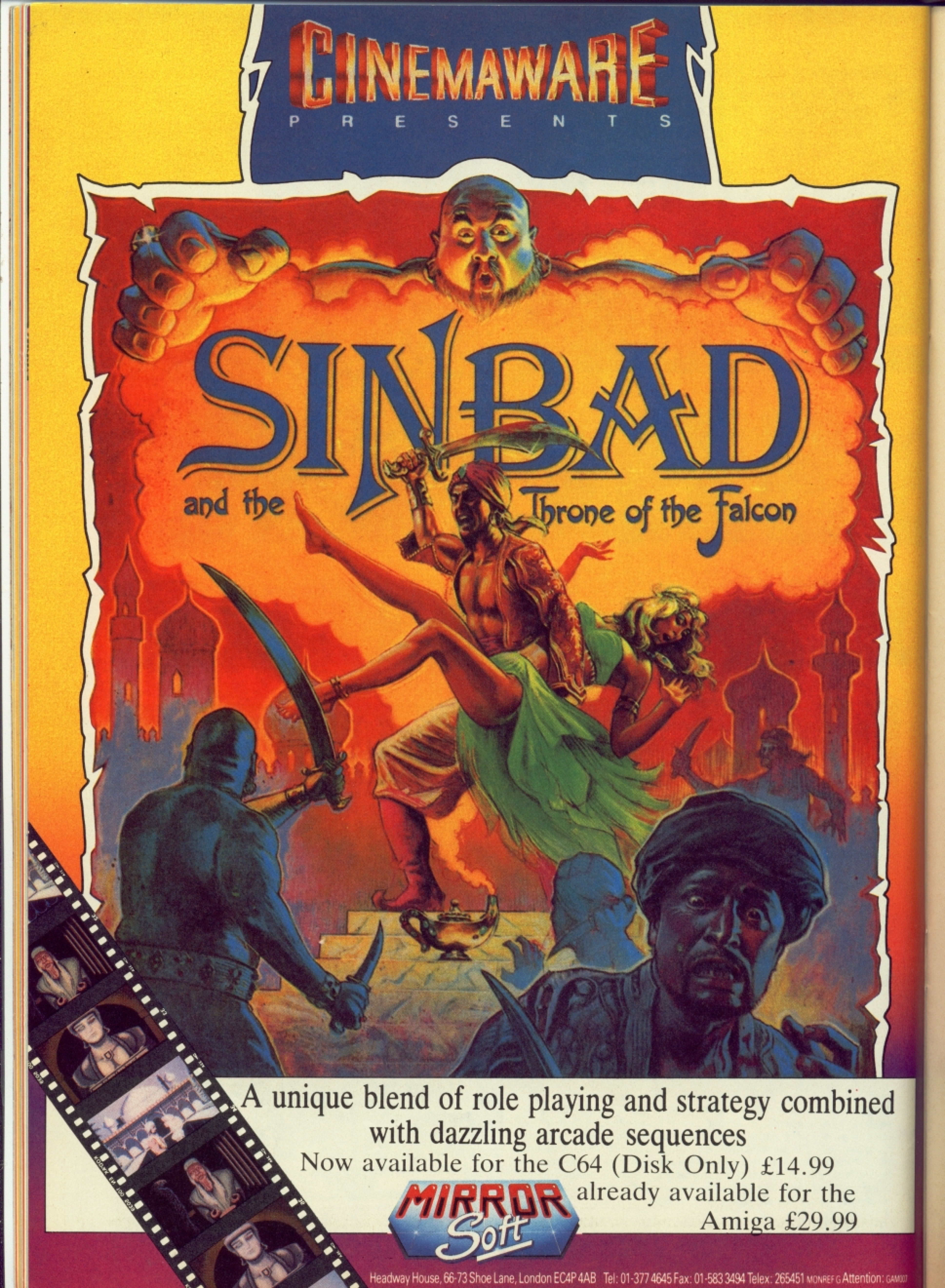
LUXOR

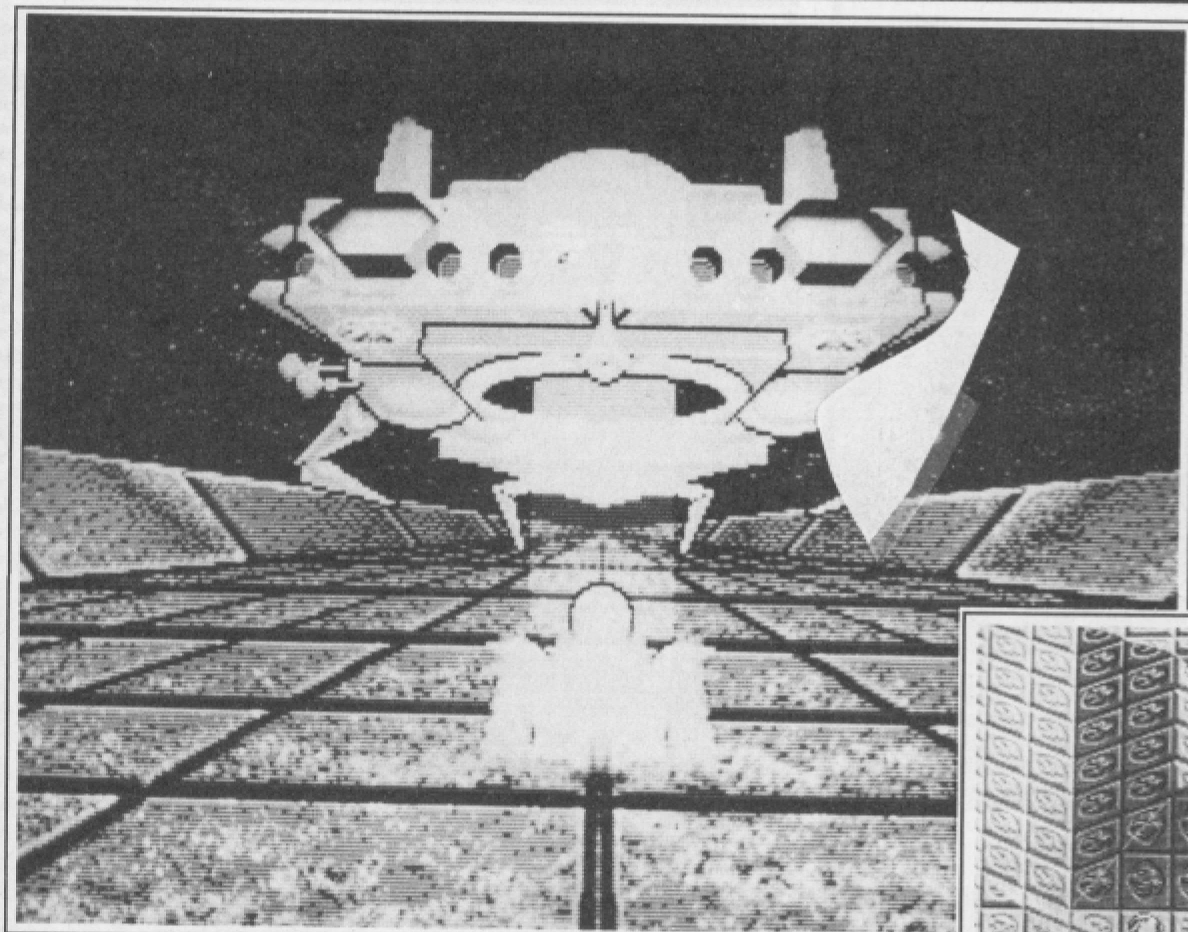
Come home, Hans Christian Anderson, all is forgiven! In Software Horizon's forthcoming *Luxor*, you've got to battle your way through three levels of space 'n' aliens in your trusty spaceship, blasting everything in sight and keeping your power bank in the black. Why are you undergoing all this hardship? To rescue a beautiful princess, of course! And if that wasn't enough for y'all to take, successful completion of the game will bring about the appearnce of . . . gulp . . . a fairy, who grants you a single wish! This slice of utter weirdness is due for imminent release.



NEBULUS

Well no-one can accuse *Nebulus* author John Phillips of slavishly sticking to jaded old game concepts. This conversion of his wonderful 64 game finds you guiding a small froggish creature named Pogo up a series of towers using steps and lifts. He must avoid the various bouncing eyes and slippery stairs designed to foil his quest to kill the revolving orbs and destroy the towers. What with all the Amiga's enhancements adding to what was really rather a spiffing game on eight-bit, we imagine that quite a few of you will be purchasing this Hewson product on its release in October.


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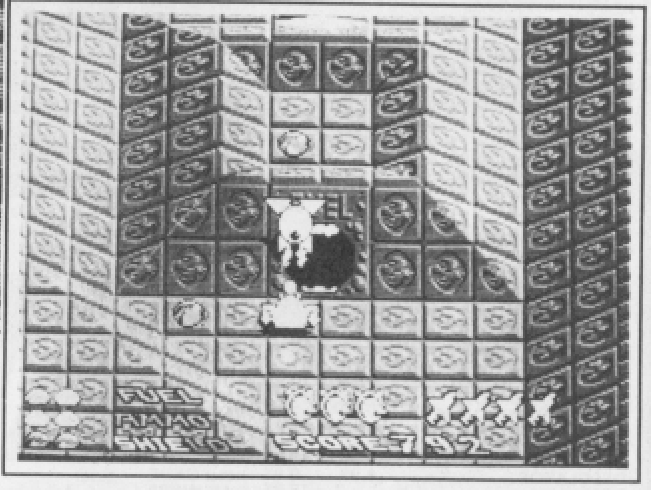


AMIGA

Logotron
Price: £24.95

Star Goose — something of a turkey after Star Ray.

The goose that layed the square egg.



Stargoose

The authors of Firebird's *Black Lamp*, Steve Cain and GP 'Kenny' Everett, have put their heads together again to produce Logotron's latest shoot 'em up, the unusually titled *Star Goose*.

The Star Goose of the title refers to the oddly-shaped craft which the hero of the piece, one Mr Scouser-Gitt, has to pilot over the geodesic landscape of Nom in his search for the Nommians' jewels.

After being dropped from a mothership the first of three Star Geese begins the negotiation of the vertically scrolling Nommian landscape. Made up of angular sloping hills and valleys, the Star Goose hugs the contours of the ground as it moves along, altering its orientation as it does so.

The Nommian defences are made up of gun emplacements, static mines and small fighter craft which whizz around the landscape. The surface of Nom is also littered with hazardous liquid-filled pools into which the Geese can fall and are destroyed.

The current Star Goose has shield, fuel, ammo and missile supplies which are constantly drained during play. Shields, fuel and ammo can be replenished by flying into the corresponding entrances which are guarded by a blue metal face whose mouth opens to allow the Goose access.

A tunnel is then entered which has a series of large eyes dotted along its inner walls. The Star Goose can be manoeuvred around the tunnel interior and collecting the eyes progressively restocks the supply in question. Missiles are simply collected by flying through gateways along the route.

At first sight, *Star Goose* looks quite interesting, and the way in which the craft follows the contours of the ground is really captivating. Unfortunately, the gameplay fails to fulfil the promise of the graphics (is this becoming a trend on the Amiga?) and you're left with a shoot 'em up of very little variety, and one or two annoying design faults.

The aim of each level is to collect six differently coloured jewels, and then re-enter the portal from which the Star Goose appeared. A similar but more fiercely defended landscape is then entered, and the process repeated.

Destroying many of the obstacles and emplacements is made difficult by dint of the fact that the Goose can only shoot objects on the same level as itself. Your bullets fly uselessly into the air or simply hit the ground when moving up and down slopes, respectively. So gun emplacements sitting on top of small hills are almost impossible to shoot — you usually end up ramming it and wasting your shields. One could then argue that this is a job for the missiles — but guess where the missile fire buttons are? Yes! On the keyboard — and it's not even one key — you have to prime and fire the twin missiles individually using the 'A' or 'Alt' keys. A minor quibble, but one which I found really annoying, considering the precision needed to guide the Goose in the first place.

As the hero says in the intro: '... they're so boring. If you've scrolled over one planet blasting away at God-knows-who, you've scrolled 'em all'. I couldn't agree more, you Scouser-Gitt.

Steve Jarratt

AMIGA

STAR GOOSE — DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY

Category	Rating (1–10)
Video	4
Audio	6
Toughness	3
Endurance	7
VFM	4

CU RATING: 4

TRYBRIDGE

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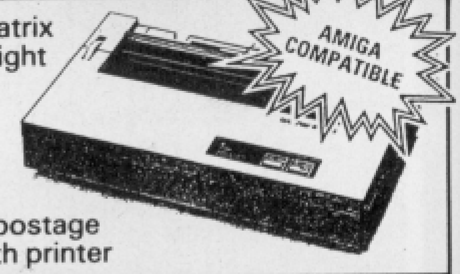
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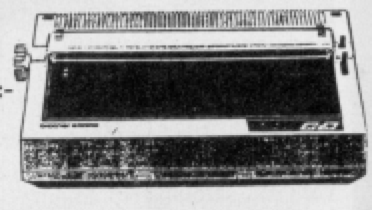
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Just when I was beginning to feel that the left-to-right scrolling *R-Type* game format had been done to death, *Zynaps* comes along and proves me completely and utterly wrong by proving that there's still life in the age-old genre. Hewson's latest is one of the most colourful and certainly one of the most enjoyable shoot 'em ups yet to appear.

If you can cast your mind back about nine months or so, you'll remember that *Zynaps*, programmed by Graftgold boys Dominic Robinson and John Cumming caused quite a stir on the 64 when it was first released, and scooped a number of accolades, a CU Screen Star (most importantly).

Zynaps is very much in the same mould as games such as *IO* and *Nemesis*. The basic idea is to fly a spaceship through a series of left-to-right scrolling levels, shooting aliens and accumulating extra weapons as you go. The scrolling is set at a fixed rate, so you can't bottle out and head back half way through if the going gets too heavy (which it invariably does).

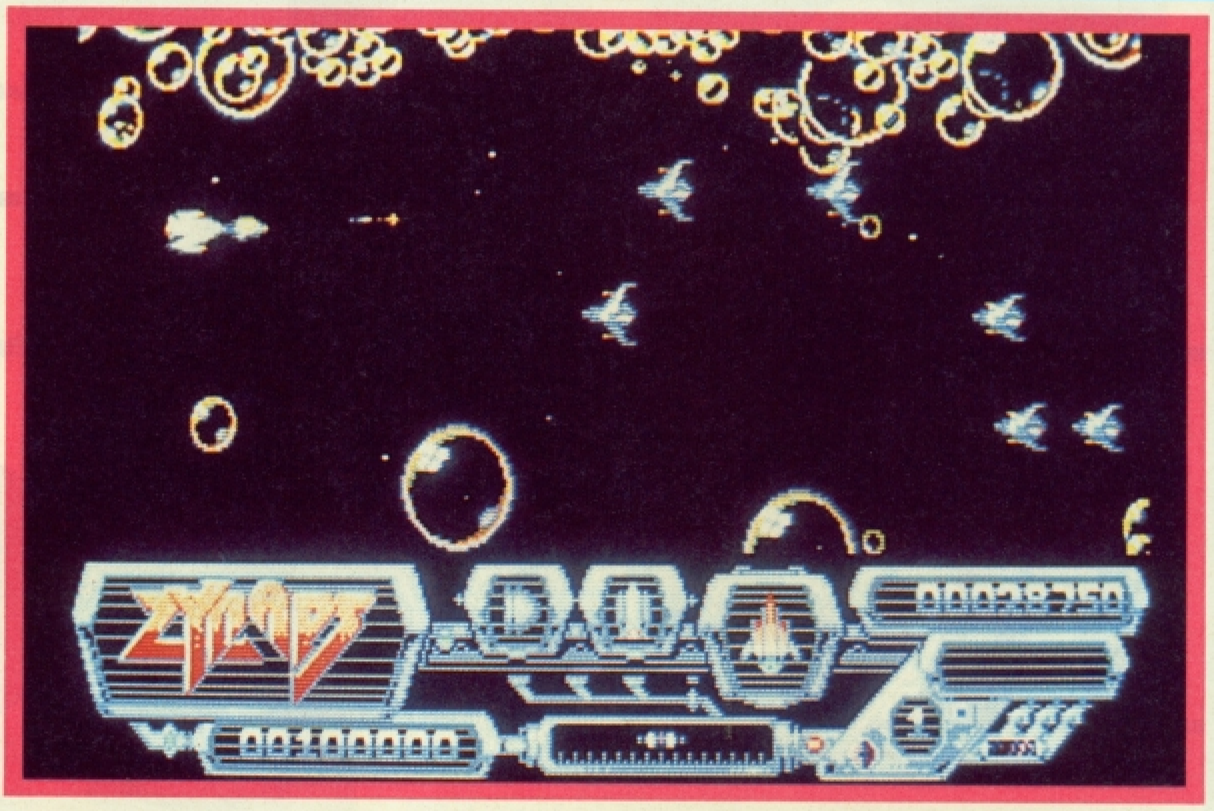
The aliens that attack don't just float around the screen any old how. Each wave has it's own specific attack pattern, the most common being a bouncing caterpillar-type string of nasties. Unlike *R-Type* or *Nemesis* however, the order of the attack waves isn't preset and so there's no way of telling what kind of aliens will be the next to arrive on screen. As usual, disposing of them is just a matter of shooting them. The trouble is, the laser you're given at the start is a rather pitiful little weapon, and there's no way you could possibly get through the entire game without trading it in for something a bit deadlier. This is done by shooting a wave of marauding aliens, which leaves behind a glowing power-pod. Collecting this with the fire button held down will activate the weapon currently depicted in the status display. If you want to advance to higher levels of weapon, however, the way to go about it is to collect a few pods *without* the fire button held down. Each time you do this, the 'current weapon' icon will advance to the next in line. When the one you want appears, just make sure the fire button is down when you collect the next capsule.

There are about five power-ups available, including the obligatory speedup and bomb, and my personal fave, the super homing missile, which appears at the end of the weapons list. Collect a couple of these, and you've got virtually nothing to worry about. "By 'eck, them ★!#%ers don't mess about, do they?" said big Nige Taylor, CU's Yorkshire pudding of an Adman as several extremely lethal missiles burnt across the screen, locking on and burning to a crisp every alien mutha on the screen in one go.

Each level is about eighty squillion screens long (well at least that's what it seems like) and guess what lurks at the end of each one . . . Yes, you got it, a big mean mothership. Actually, they aren't that much of a problem to wipe out, as long as you can survive the bullets and mines they throw at you long enough. When the mothership finally blows, your score is given a quick boost and you progress to the next level. There are about 14 in all, and begin to reach the 'eat your own underpants' degree of difficulty at about level four, when the game area starts to get so amazingly narrow that it's hard enough to get through even without any aliens!

Zynaps is terrific. It's certainly the best of the *Nemesis* bunch so far, boasting some exquisite backdrops and sprites, particularly in the later stages and credit must go to the talented Pete Lyon for designing them.

Gary Whitta



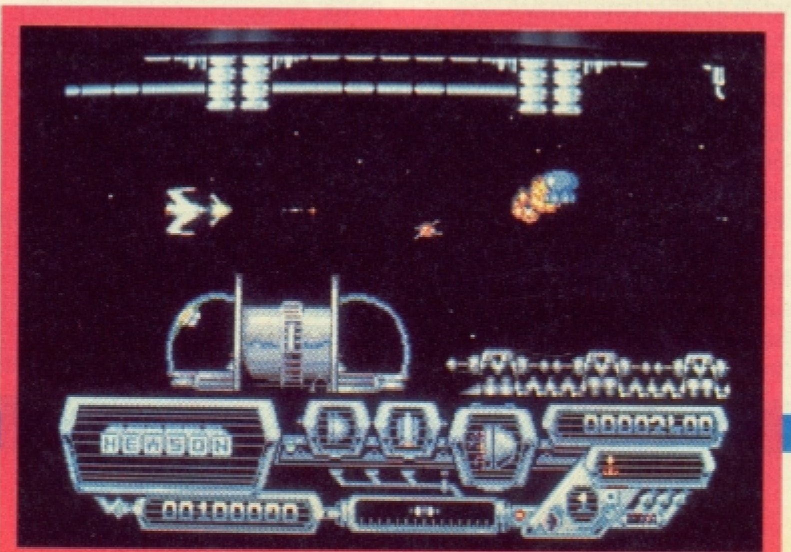
ZYNAPS

AMIGA

ZYNAPS — DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY

	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Video	8
Audio	7
Toughness	8
Endurance	7
VFM	7

CU RATING: 8



STARTING UP

★ Don't collect more than one speedup. Doing so makes the control too sensitive and so it's easy to oversteer and hit a wall.
★ Go for the super homing missile straight away. Once you've got it, collect another. Once you've got two, just keep stabbing the fire button and you'll hardly have to worry about aliens at all for a while.
★ On level two, don't try to shoot the asteroids, they're invincible. Avoid them and stay away from the edge of the screen.
★ Don't bother collecting the bomb. It's only useful on ground installations, which very rarely appear.

Rocket Ranger

Price: £29.99
Mirrorsoft/Cinemaware

Ask anyone to name something that the 1940s are best remembered for, apart from the Second World War, and the chances are the reply you'll get will be the old Republic Cinema Serials which captivated Saturday Morning audiences both young and old and on both sides of the Atlantic for many a year, and still have a cult following today. One of the most popular of these was *King Of The Rocket Men,* which followed the hero, Commando Cody as he jetpacked around the world, thwarting evil criminals and duffing up Nazis. *Rocket Ranger* is an attempt by Cinemaware to capture the old magic of these serials, and the end result is better than anyone could have hoped for.

The storyline of *Rocket Ranger* is suitably corny and presented in the form of a wonderful graphic opening sequence at the start of the game. The year is 1940 and Cody, a US Engineer serving at Fort Dix is working late one night when, after a mysterious blinding flash, he finds an assortment of wonderous rocket equipment on his desk. The accompanying booklet tells a terrifying story of a world 100 years distant, in which the Nazis have won the war, conquered the entire planet and now rule over it with their own barbaric form of 'government'.

In an attempt to stop this horrifying eventuality, agents from the future have sent the equipment back through time in the hope that some brave soul will take on the role of Rocket Ranger, and single-handedly thwart the Nazi's plans.

After the opening sequence, the game proper begins at Fort Dix, where Cody plans out his mission. Before he can go anywhere, he must report to the War Room, where five top secret agents are sent around the world, gathering intelligence on the Nazis plans. The first piece of information you'll get is from your agent in Germany, who informs you what the Fascists are up to. Their plan, devised by the evil Colonel Leermeister, is to crush the allied forces using a new form of bomb powered by Lunarium, a rare mineral found only on the Moon. To get the Lunarium from mines on the moon, the Nazis are brainwashing women, turning them into zombie-like slaves, and sending them to the moon to mine the Lunarium.

To stop the Nazis before they can realise their diabolical plan, Cody must collect five individual sections of space rocket, each held at a secret Nazi base. Once he has all five, he can piece them together and fly to the Moon, where he can attempt to destroy the Lunarium mine. To find the rocket bases, Cody must position his agents around the world via a map screen which uses icons to show where each agent is. To look for a rocket base, position an agent in a country and wait for him to report back with his findings. Sometimes the country will be clean while another time it may hold a rocket base, a secret Nazi Lunarium plant, or a number of assorted Nazi hideouts, such as the brainwashing complexes or munitions dumps. Once an agent has found a base, he can be transfered to another country and another mission (providing Leermeister hasn't found him and had him shot that is!). As soon as Cody has some useful information, he had better act on it and fast, as the Zeppelin bombing fleet gets nearer every day. Should Cody stay at Fort Dix for more than a year, he's Court Martialled for cowardice, and rightly so.

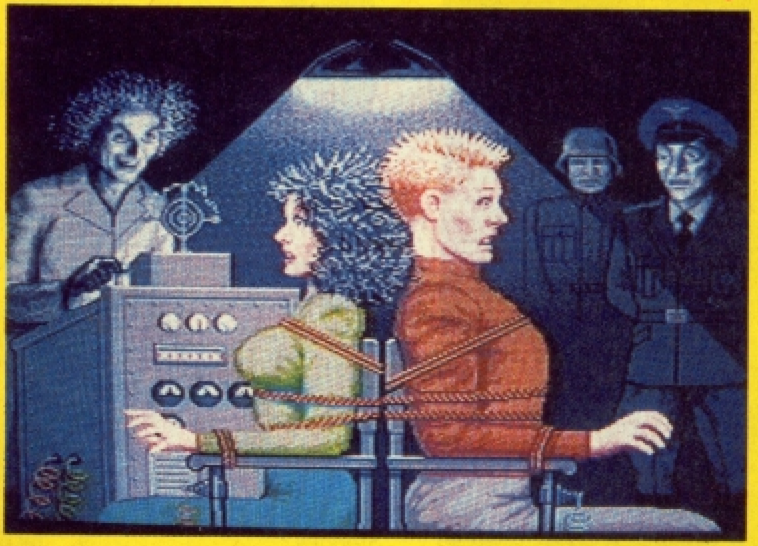


Cody limbers up for takeoff . . .

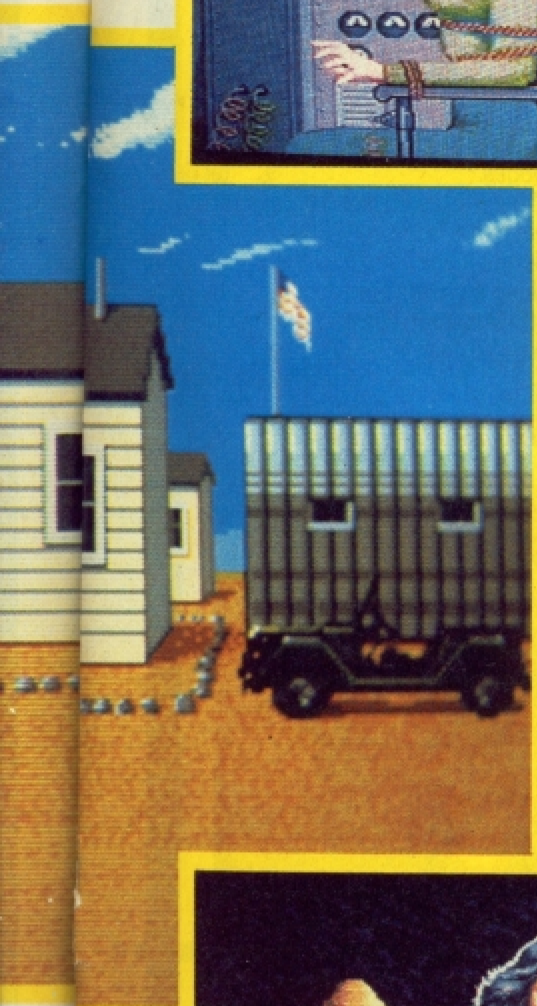
Using a code wheel supplied with the game, the rocket pack can be loaded with the right amount of Lunarium to travel to the destination country. Taking off from Fort Dix is a tricky procedure that takes time to master. Cody runs from left to right across the parade grounds, and the joystick button must be pressed each time his feet hit the ground to build up speed. When he is running fast enough, his rocket pack bleeps and pushing up on the stick will propel him skywards. Should the button presses be out of synch with Cody's footsteps, the rocket pack coughs and wheezes and Cody falls flat on his face. If this happens three times, Cody takes off automatically,



The Prof and his daughter are saved from the clutches of the evil Nazis.



Electricity. Energy for death.



but at the expense of two months' training time.

After takeoff there's a short graphic sequence that shows Cody's flight over a world map before he reaches his destination. When he finally gets there, there'll be any one of four different kinds of battle awaiting him. For example, if Cody arrives at a country occupied by a Nazi complex such as a bomb factory or brainwashing plant, a *Space Harrier* type game has to be played. A rear view of Cody is given as he flies high above the clouds and is assaulted by a crack squadron of Nazi planes. The planes attack in waves, and in many different kinds of formation, firing at you as they pass. Cody can take two direct hits from the fighters, but a third will cause his rocket pack to cut out, and he'll be forced to parachute to a nearby country. Fortunately he's carrying protection in the form of a deadly rapid fire radium pistol that kills 100% of all known fascists dead with just a single shot. If Cody manages to knock out the entire squadron, he automatically completes the mission in hand, and the result is displayed as a text screen, detailing exactly what Cody has achieved and how much Nazi efficiency has suffered. Slowing down the Nazi war machine is the key to winning the game, as should they attain 100% efficiency they win the war outright.

Flying to a country that houses a rocket base sees Cody engage in hand-to-hand combat with a German guard as he battles to steal a piece of rocket. To defeat the guard, Cody must reduce the guard's energy level to zero by continually punching him. The guard is normally defensive and just concentrates on blocking Cody's punches, so Cody must be alert, punching the guard in the head when he blocks his body and vice versa. The guard will from time to time have a jab back at Cody, so he has to be ready to block as well, or he'll get duffed over by the guard and be captured.

When the guard's energy reaches zero, he falls back against the wall, hitting his head on a control panel and opening a steel door that slides back to reveal one of the elusive rocket parts which is then smuggled back to Ford Dix by your friends in the local resistance. The first part is a walkover to win, but the rest is not so easy, as the soldiers who guard them get progressively tougher.

Rocket Ranger is a BIG game. So big in fact that, like previous Cinemaware games it fills up two disks. Fortunately here at CU we've got an external disk drive, so the need for the tiresome task of disk-swapping was eliminated. Although Mirrorsoft's Cathy Campos ensures us that disk-swapping has been kept 'to a minimum' on single drive Amigas, it might be wise for those who aren't blessed with such luxuries as external drives or extra memory to take a look before splashing out.

As you fly about the world gathering rocket parts, Cody's Lunarium supply begins to get low, so it must be replenished by raiding the Nazi Lunarium plant. With any luck Cody's secret agents find it quite early on in the game (it's normally found somewhere in Africa) and he can then raid Lunarium from it himself or receive it in small amounts as it's stolen by partisans. The Lunarium base is heavily guarded by Anti-aircraft guns, so a night attack is necessary. Zooming over the base in the same *Space Harrier* fashion as described earlier, Cody must knock out all the ack-ack guns with his radium pistol while avoiding the flak they throw at him.

Aside from the main mission of acquiring rocket parts and stealing Lunarium, there are a couple of sub missions that must be undertaken if the Nazis are to be stopped, the first being to stop Professor Barnstorff and his voluptuous daughter Jane from being kidnapped and sent to the moon, where the Prof would be forced to use his scientific knowledge to speed up Lunarium production. To stop them reaching

Find this one in the game if you can.



*R*ocket *R*anger



James Bond time as your secret agents scour the world.



Cody contemplates life, the Universe and rocket packs.

the moon, Cody has to fly to the Atlantic, where a zeppelin is taking them to the Fatherland. Yet more *Space Harrier* frolics here as Cody chases the zeppelin, avoiding the air to air missiles and trying to shoot the gondola section at the base of the airship. Missing the gondola and hitting the airship itself will cause it to blow up and the mission will have failed. Successfully hitting the gondola will see off the Nazi gunners, allowing Cody to board. However, the mission isn't completed yet, as the Prof and Jane have no idea who Cody is and won't allow him to get at the airship's controls unless he can convince them by choosing the right things to say to them for a selection of set phrases.

If Cody can stop the Nazis from getting the Prof to the moon, he can buy enough time to get the rocket parts assembled so he can fly to the moon where the final battle takes place. With Radium pistol in hand, Cody faces the female lunar zombies scantily clad in leather hip-boots who drop down from ropes and strafe him with laser fire. Cody has a limited time to destroy all the female zombies by blasting them with his gun before the exposure to the Lunarium causes him to black out (Lunarium affects men but not women, which is why the Nazis are using them as slaves). Shooting them all before time runs out brings Lunarium production to a halt, thwarting Leermeister's plans and saving the free world as we know it.

Rocket Ranger is quite simply a brilliant game. Cinemaware, after much experimentation have at last produced a game that truly combines state of the art aesthetics with gameplay to match. The strategic side of the game such as positioning your agents and gathering intelligence is absorbing, and all the arcade sequences, particularly the fight with the guard and the shoot-out on the moon are so good they'd make commercial quality games on their own! As usual, presentation is exemplary. The film-style opening sequence is atmospheric and there are some excellent set-pieces such as the takeoff sequence and the secret Nazi transmissions picked up on Cody's wrist monitor. The graphics are far better than anything Cinemaware have produced before, and the screenshots here should convince you of that. Sound is of a similarly high quality with plenty of tunes and exquisite sampled effects. Just listen to the fist fight for some real bonecrunching punch sounds! What little speech there is is well executed — far better than the crackly samples heard in *The Three Stooges*.

What makes *Rocket Ranger* such a great game is the way all the different ideas hang together, making an overall product that is by far the most fun I've had with my Amiga all year.

Gary Whitta



See what you can do with a squeezy bottle and a toilet roll tube if you put your mind to it?

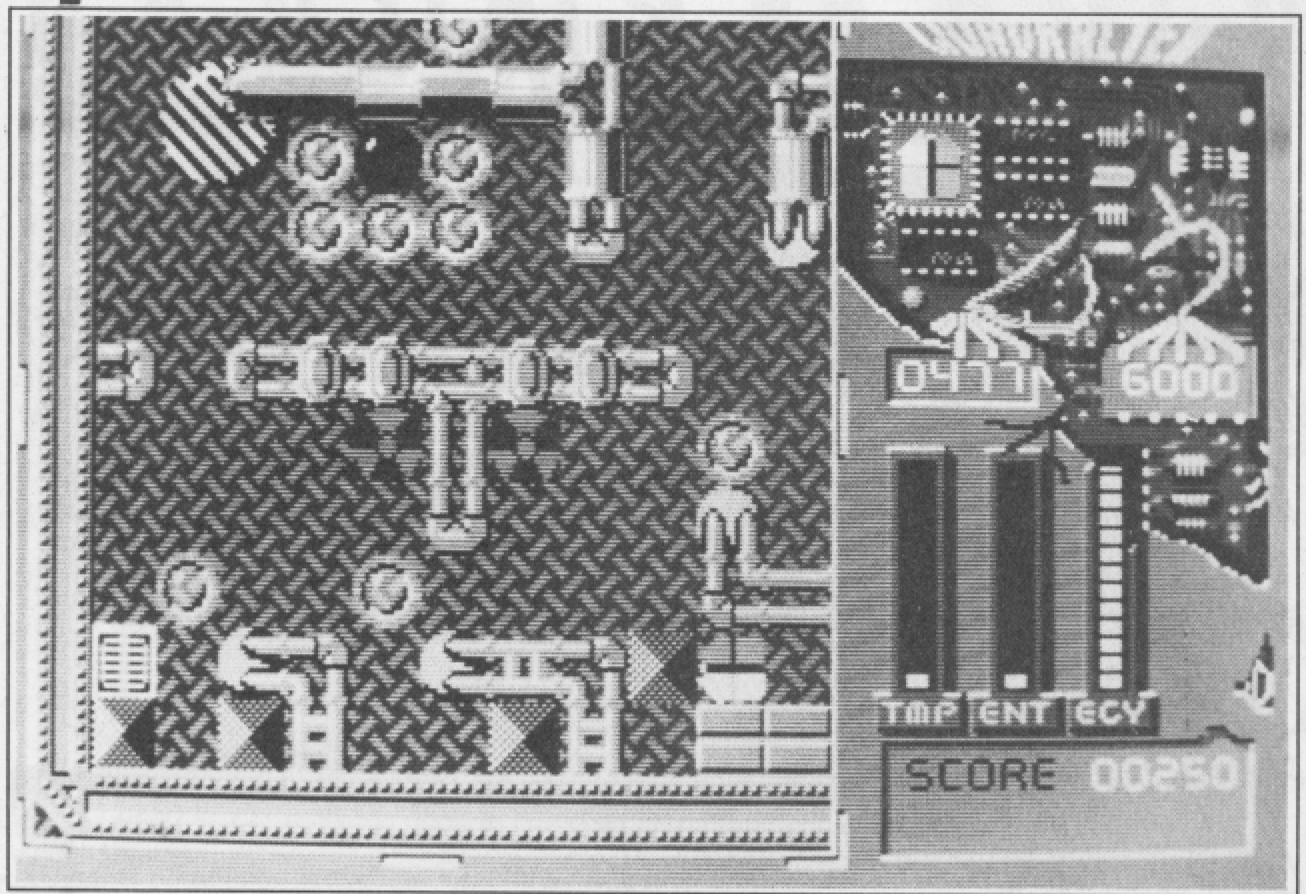
ROCKET RANGER — DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

VIDEO
AUDIO
TOUGHNESS
ENDURANCE
VFM

CU RATING

9

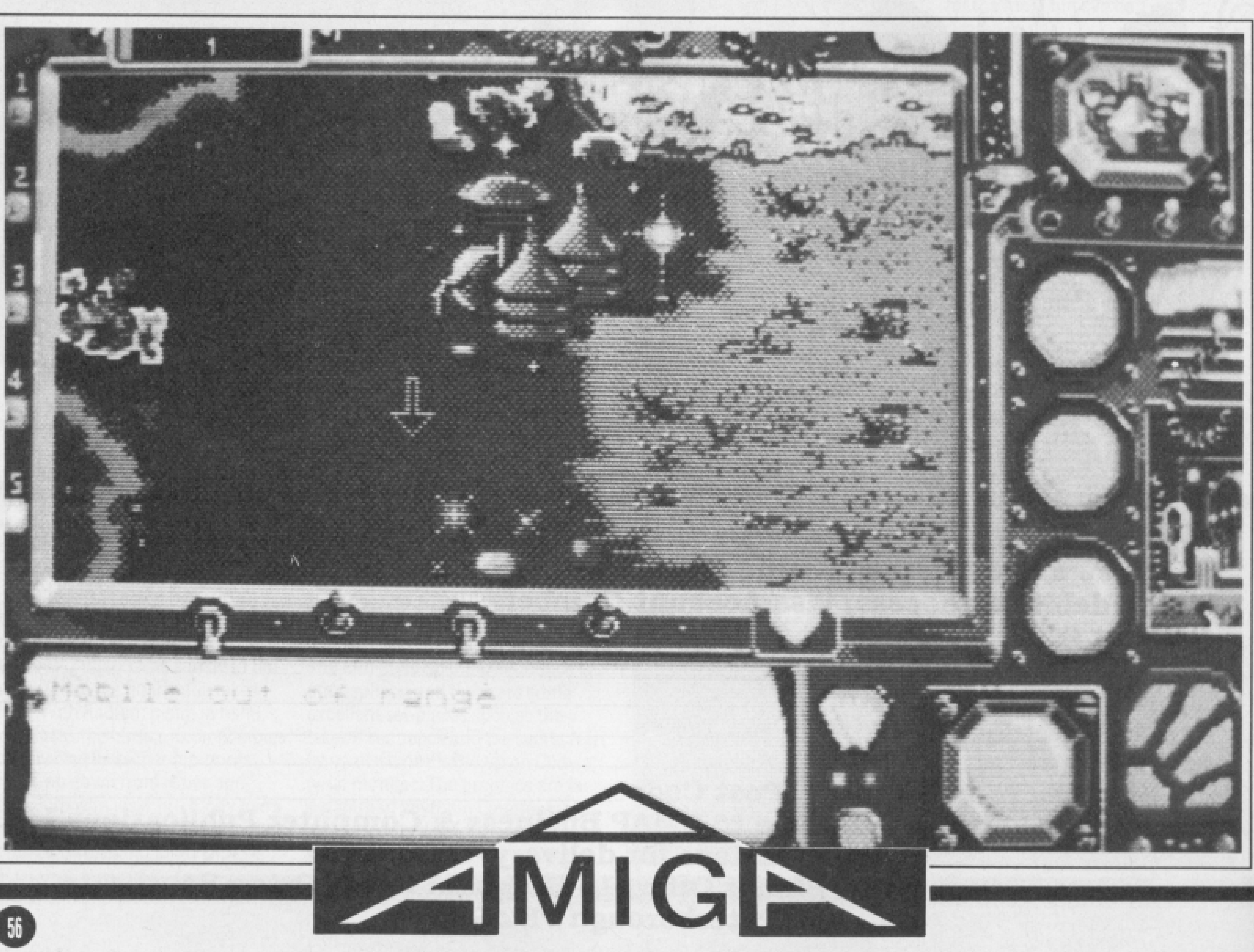


Logotron
Price £24.95

Quadralien, Logotron's second release after *Star Ray* bears a slight similarity to other games in the ageing *Gauntlet* genre, insofar as it's a multi directional scrolling affair viewed from above. In true corny plot fashion, *Quadralien* is set in the distant future and takes place on a huge computer controlled energy base in deep space by the name of Astra. For some unknown reason, the computers that run the base have shut down and subsequently the base is dangerously close to meltdown. Your mission is to stop the reactor from melting down and destroy the mother alien in the central reactor.

Fortunately, you don't have to travel to the base yourself. Instead you're given two droids (from a possible choice of six) to do your bidding by remote control. Each

QUADRALIAN



AMIGA

droid has its own specific strengths and weaknesses, and learning exactly what they are is part of the key to success.

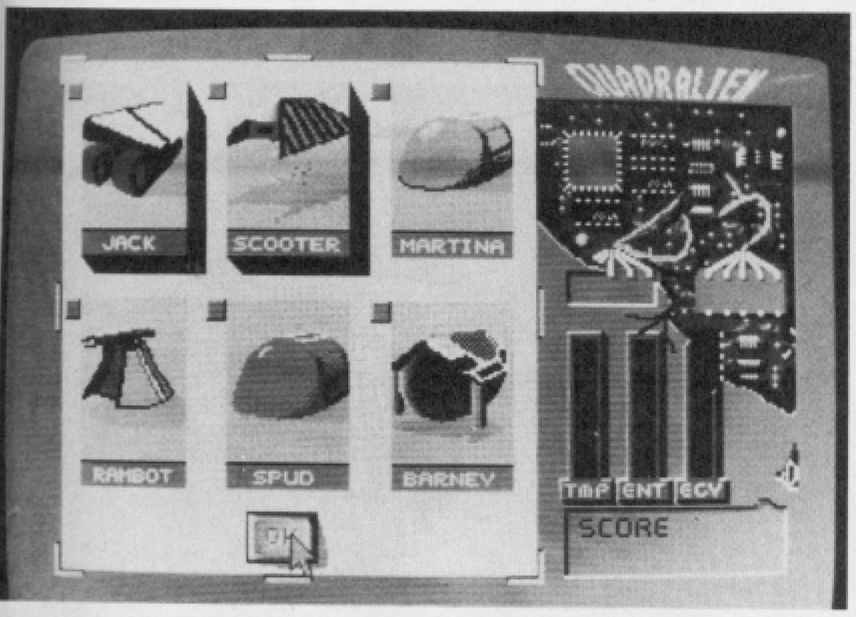
As part of the computer malfunction, all the levels of Astra apart from level one have been sealed, and progression to the higher levels is achieved by reaching a certain score, whereupon you are allowed access to the next one. If you can't be bothered to go about solving the puzzles in the game, you can simply blast everything you see with your lasers until the target score is reached. This however is a time and energy consuming process, so the best way to actually complete the game is to set about actually sorting out the problems on each level in turn. The puzzles are of a fairly simple nature and require more dexterity than strategic thought, due to the game's arcade overtones. For example temporarily slowing down the bases rapidly rising temperature is done simply by nudging up against a barrerl of cooling fluid and pushing it down a chute.

Completing the mission is not just a case of methodically dropping barrels down holes and blowing up doors though. There are Quadralien nasties lurking about which pose problems all of their own, while there are certain parts of the floor that must be avoided, such as the earthing boxes that immediately drain a droid of all its power should it stumble onto one. Fortunately there are places where hapless droids can take a sort of pit-stop in order to refresh themselves. The information consoles allow you to recharge your batteries, clean any radioactivity from you and gain information on the current level's features.

Quadralien is a bit of a letdown after such an impressive debut release. It seems to me that the designers have tried to produce something completely original, and they deserve credit for that alone. However, the game has been very poorly executed, and the end result is something of a disappointment. Badly defined sprites and backdrops accompanied by extremely shaky scrolling all helped to put me off from the very start, as did the terribly depressing music (probably Dave Whittaker's worst so far). Gameplay suffers quite seriously as a result of these cosmetic shortcomings, and because of this the overall product falls uncomfortably between mediocre and dire. Give it a miss.

Gary Whitta

One of these is not like the others . . .



AMIGA

QUADRALIEN — DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY	1–10
Video	4
Audio	2
Toughness	7
Endurance	3
VFM	3
CU RATING	**3**

TANGLEWOOD

Microdeal
Price: 24.95

After wading through the small booklet that forms the instructions for *Tanglewood*, I finally managed to come up with a short version of a long-winded plot. Your uncle who claims to have the sole mining writes to the planet T'ngly-y-wd is being muscled in on by some big men who know about the valuable gems scattered about the planet. These nasty men have also stolen the documents that prove that your uncle has sole ownership. What you have to do is to find the documents and hand them back to their rightful owner.

It all sounds pretty easy, if it weren't for the fact that you can't actually go down to the planet. Something about the temperature or some such mutterings. So what you have are five different types of mining robots, called Mobiles through to 5, and it's with these that you have to carry out your duty.

The whole game is controlled through a cockpit/control panel and a large window on the world. Viewed from above, it's at this point you notice how crude, almost childish, all the graphics are. Though it looks like a 'true' overhead view, a quick examination show it to be nothing more than a series of icons laid next to one another. In fact, large though it is, the landscape is very bland, with just a dozen icons being repeated over and over again, to represent bushes, wastebins, buildings and paths. This would have just been acceptable on the 64, maybe, but on the Amiga?

The five mobiles are controlled by moving a pointer into the map area (if using a joystick) and clicking. Movement with the joystick is relatively easy. Just push the joystick in the required direction. Mouse control, however, is incredibly tetchy. When you click, you have to imagine that the pointer is in the centre of a four pointed star and move the mouse along the arms of it to move the mobile. Unfortunately, the greatest distance from the centre has priority, which means that, if you move the pointer up the screen 100 pixels, and you then want to go right, you have to move the pointer more than 100 pixels to the right, which means that distances get greater and greater, making the game more than slightly unplayable.

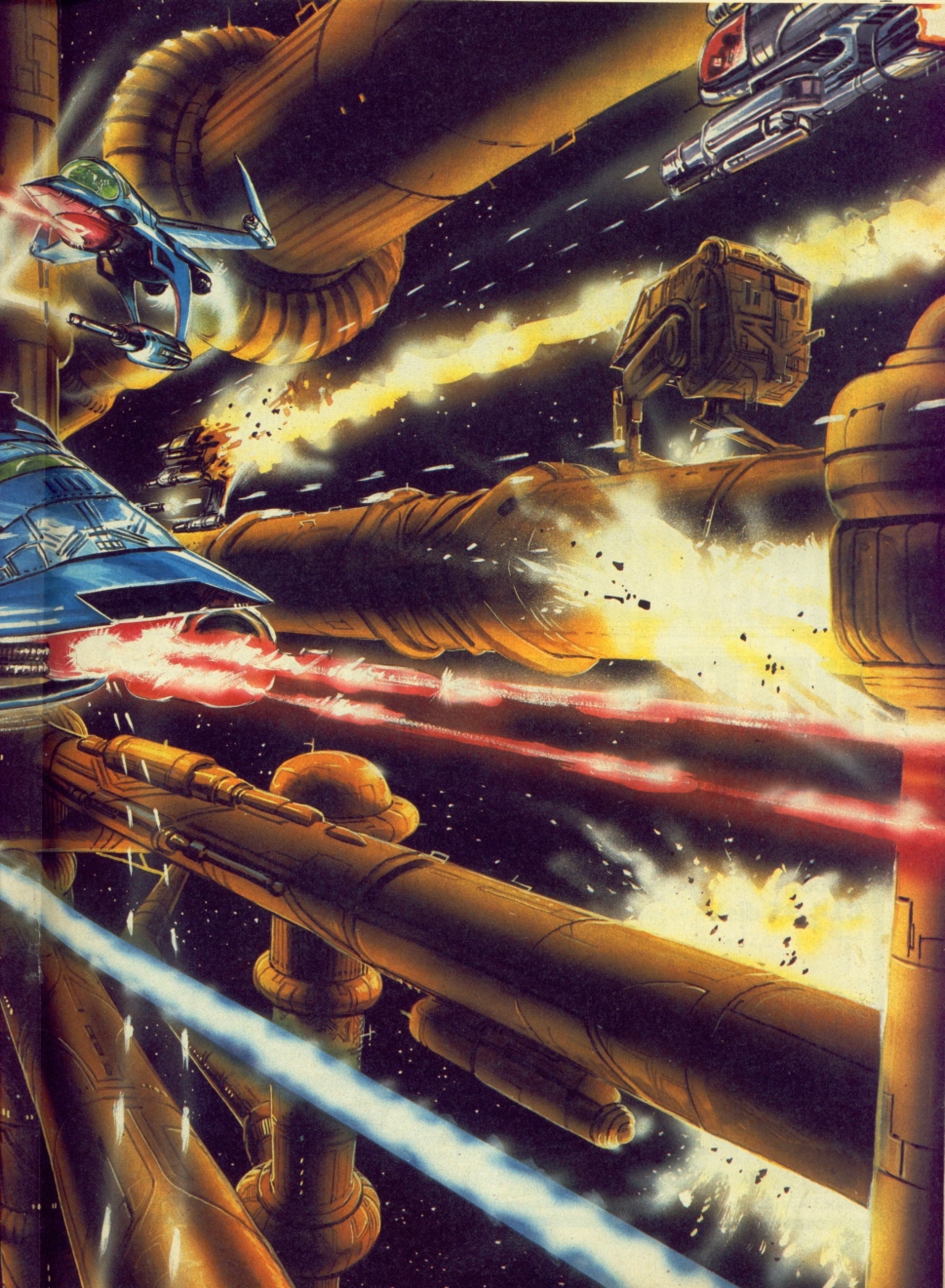
Around the edges of the map are switches and dials. These show you the outside temperature (a waste of time, I thought, as it doesn't seem to affect you at all) and the amount of energy your mobile has. The switches are there to perform mundane functions like quit game, save game, sound off and the like. Also there's an interesting switch that tells you where you are. The funny thing is that, no matter where I was, it always said 'On a path'.

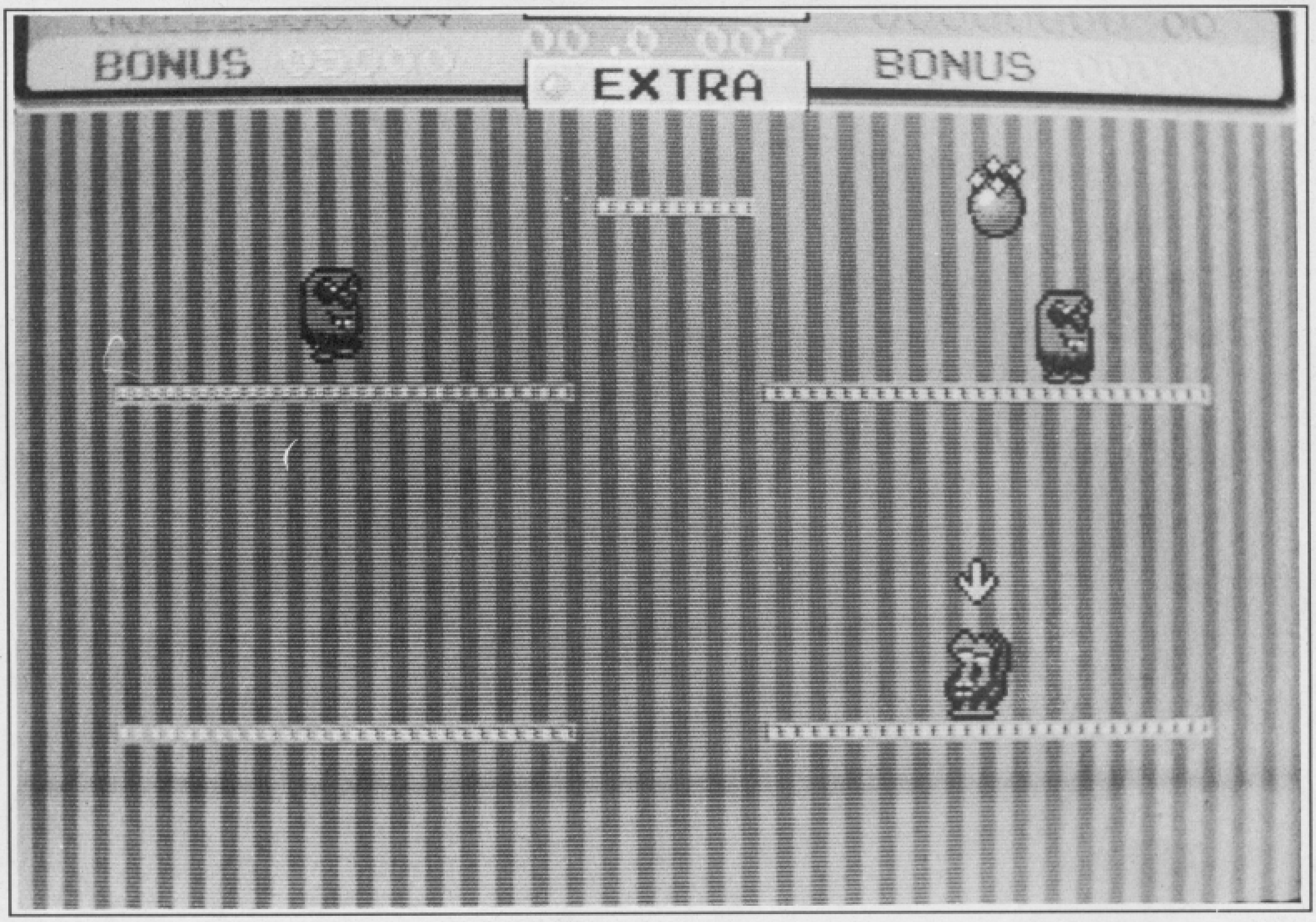
After playing *Tanglewood* for a while, I began to feel that I was going round and round in circles. After playing a bit longer, I still found I was getting nowhere. *Tanglewood* is just another one of those games that can claim to have billions of different screens, but makes no claim that there's anything in any of them. If you want a game that in any way show you a little of what your Amiga is really capable of, then look elsewhere.

Tony Dillon

TANGLEWOOD — DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY	1–10
Video	4
Audio	4
Toughness	5
Endurance	3
VFM	2
CU RATING	**3**


COMMODORE
USER
C.U. POSTER No10
ARMALYTE





So which of 'em is Charles Manson?

HELTER SKELTER

ASL
Amiga
Price: £14.95 disk

The title of ASL's latest Amiga release is somewhat misleading, since it has little to do with fairground slides, Beatles lyrics or mass murders (read the book of the same name). Frustration is really the name of the game for this jolly little test of dexterity will probably leave you a gibbering wreck with teethmarks in your joystick (eek!).

Taking control of a bouncing ball, your aim is to progress from screen to screen by eliminating the strange monsters inhabiting the platform infested landscapes. This is achieved by blatting them on the head with the ball. Sounds simple enough. The problem lies in the fact that you have to remove the creatures in order, as signified by a large arrow pointing at the next one for the chopping block. Should you blat another by mistake, it splits into two smaller monsters who scurry around with added vigour, increasing your hit list by one.

Still sounds simple, doesn't it? Yes, well the real trouble starts in guiding your rubber sphere around the screen. The ball constantly bounces, and its efforts are simply reduced (by pressing fire on the ascent) or increased (by pressing fire on the descent). This strange control method takes a good few games to get to grips with, but once mastered doesn't prove too bad. However, the combination of devious platforms, reproducing monsters, a wildly bouncing ball AND a 20 second time limit really puts the pressure on!

It's not all doom and gloom, though: there are a number of useful bonus items that appear on-screen and are collected on contact. These include extra time, energy, and score, plus an extremely useful warp, giving instant access to the next screen.

There are 80 pre-defined landscapes to be cleared, plus 48 screens on which the more imaginative of you may vent your artistic (or masochistic) tendencies by designing your own layouts. There's also a code-access system which enables you to enter the later levels without having to continuously play through those ever-so-familiar early ones.

Hardly the stuff of 16-bit wet dreams, but what IS there is very colourful, extremely smooth, and easy on the ears. A bit steep at fifteen quid, mind you, but *Helter Skelter* does provide some entertainment — with a large dose of irritation for good measure.

Steve Jarratt

HELTER SKELTER — *DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Video
Audio
Toughness
Endurance
VFM

CU RATING

6

Epyx
Price: £24.95

SUB BATTLE SIMULATOR

Epyx's contribution to the small but popular genre of submarine simulations is *Sub Battle Simulator*.

As in *Silent Service*, the game is set in World War II, in the Pacific Ocean. At the outset of the game you're given a selection of different game types of varying levels of difficulty. There are 60 missions to attempt as well as the option to indulge in a spot of target practice.

The game itself is presented very much more like *Red October* than *Silent Service*, as the whole game is controlled from just one screen. The majority of the screen display is given over to the various gauges, maps, dials and switches while the top-right hand corner allows you to view the outside world directly through either the conning tower, periscope or binoculars, which are useful for viewing things close up.

Missions vary greatly in terms of description and complexity, but all of them will involve you coming into contact with the enemy sooner or later. Combat is a simple affair of firing torpedoes and deck guns at targets until they sink. The enemy doesn't really prove a worthy adversary until later missions so things can become rather boring, especially when you consider how long it takes for your sub to travel any noticeable distance. Combat has been spiced up slightly by the inclusion of enemy fighters that attack quite often but are easily done away with with a quick burst of anti-aircraft fire.

As in the other two sub games, there is some need for strategic thought such as remembering to transfer and reload torpedoes when all the tubes are empty, knowing when and when not to dive, and calculating exactly when to fire a torpedo, taking into account the speed, range and heading of your target.

Sub Battle Simulator scores over *Silent Service* and *Red October* in some respects, but it is vastly inferior in most others. It is certainly a great deal more authentic and boasts some very well-defined static graphics. Unfortunately, Epyx seem to have gone a bit over the top with the sampled sound effects, and the end result means having to wait about ten seconds for the sampled sound to load from disk every time you want to fire the deck guns or dive. Also there's very little variation in gameplay, and this is all down to bad game design and sloppy execution. Sorry guys, but as far as I'm concerned, *Silent Service* is still the definitive sub sim.

Gary Whitta

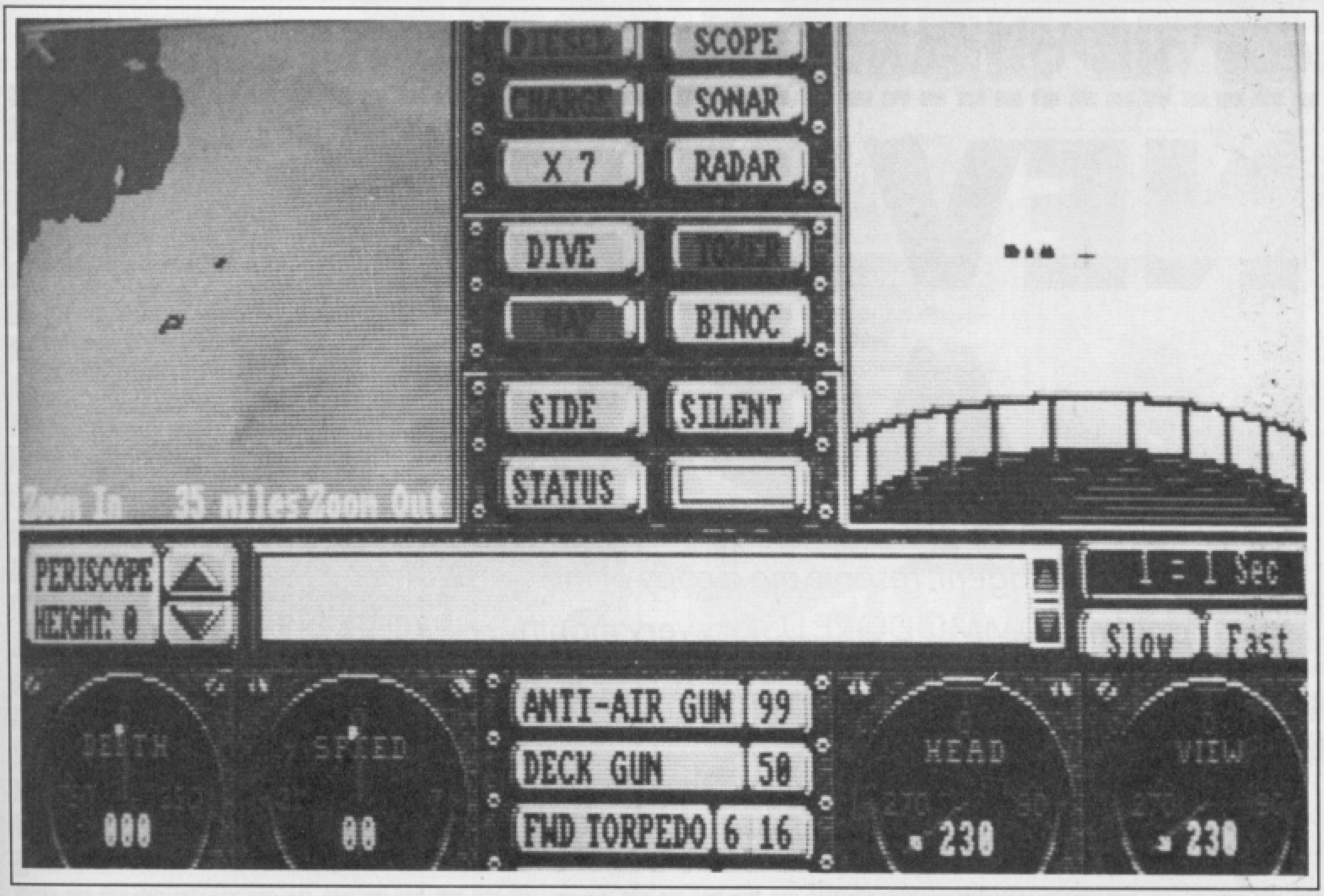
▼ ***That sinking feeling . . .***

AMIGA

SUB BATTLE SIM — DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY

	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
VIDEO	5
AUDIO	5
TOUGHNESS	7
ENDURANCE	5
VFM	4

CU RATING: 4



Titus
Price: £24.95

Following in the footsteps of their two previous attempts at a 16-bit racing game, the reasonable *Crazy Cars* and the completely awful *Fire and Forget* comes *Offshore Warrior*, from French software house Titus. Although neither of their previous releases made any real impact on the charts, Titus have yet again tried to prove that they can produce a decent race game. Sadly *Offshore Warrior* isn't it.

At least it scores a few points for offering a slightly different approach. No cars, bikes or trucks here. Instead the whole thing takes place in the water. The year is 2050 (snooze) and the hippest, trendiest and most entertaining sport of the time is driving power boats loaded with heat-seeking missiles around large aquatic arenas. What we have here is exactly the same game as *Fire and Forget*, though if anything it's more limited (if you can imagine that.)

The object of the game is simple; finish the race in first or second position so you can qualify for the next, using fair means (racing as fast as you can to beat everyone else) or foul (blast everything in sight). Actually the latter method isn't quite as exciting as it may sound, especially when you consider that you only get two (!) missiles to start off with, so if you want to plough along raking everything you find *Road Blasters*-style forget it.

Like last month's zoom-bang effort *Space Racer* it's sometimes difficult to see exactly which way you're meant to be going, as the course is only marked out by a series of bollards on either side of you that can become unclear and indistinct when racing at high speed.

Aside from this, *Offshore Warrior* is rather unfortunate in quite a lot of other respects as well. Shooting an opponent boat (or getting killed yourself) results in the most pathetic attempt at an explosion I've seen in an Amiga game. Also the impression of speed is not very well put across. The badly-defined water (which is just a series of different shades of blue in a row) seems to be scrolling the wrong way so it actually looks like you're going backwards! Also all of the objects in the water such as the rocks and the bollards move at a different speed to the water, giving the impression that they aren't actually in the water at all. These faults all manage to wreck a game that otherwise could have been VERY good indeed. If any machine can produce a red-hot race game, it's the Amiga, and Titus, being the race merchants that they are should have delivered the goods by now.

Gary Whitta



Looks like development got out of hand on Lake Michigan. ▶

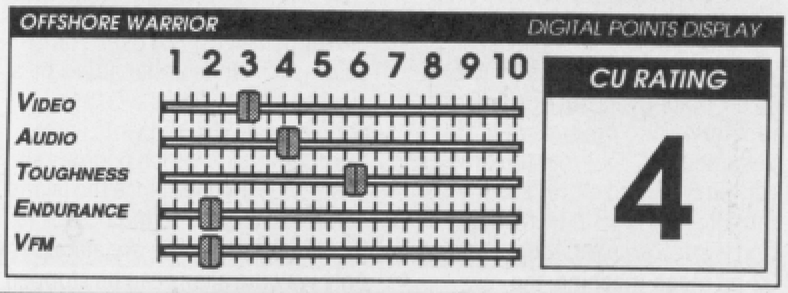
OFFSHORE WARRIOR





▼ ***Looks like Ken Masters' boat in Howards Way.***

AMIGA





COMMODORE USER SUPERSTAR



VIRUS

Amiga
Firebird
Price: £19.95

For a man who's only ever produced two games, David Braben has got one hell of a reputation as a programmer. He designed and co-wrote the timeless classic *Elite*, and more recently (about a year ago in fact) conceived and wrote *Zarch* for Acorn's mighty 32-bit mega-machine, the Archimedes.

Zarch's astounding graphics and gameplay caused it to be instantly heralded as a classic among classics and so, not surprisingly, Firebird snapped up the conversion rights the moment they saw it. After several months' development, the official Amiga version has finally arrived under the name of *Virus*, and it's nothing short of fantastic.

Set in the not-too-distant future, the game takes place over a large colony of islands under attack by a sinister race of aliens who are spreading an evil red virus across the countryside which pollutes and destroys plant life. Since the island colonists depend on their crops to survive, all their lives are at risk. The only way the aliens can be stopped

Starting Up

★ Learn to use thrust correctly. Constant thrusting results in rapid fuel loss and makes the hoverplane much harder to steer, so thrust a little and fly on momentum until you begin to drop. Then thrust a little more to keep moving.

★ Remember where your home base is (in the exact centre of the map) and practise landing to refuel until you have perfected it.

★ Watch the demo. The computer is an excellent pilot and you can pick up some great combat manouevres by watching carefully.

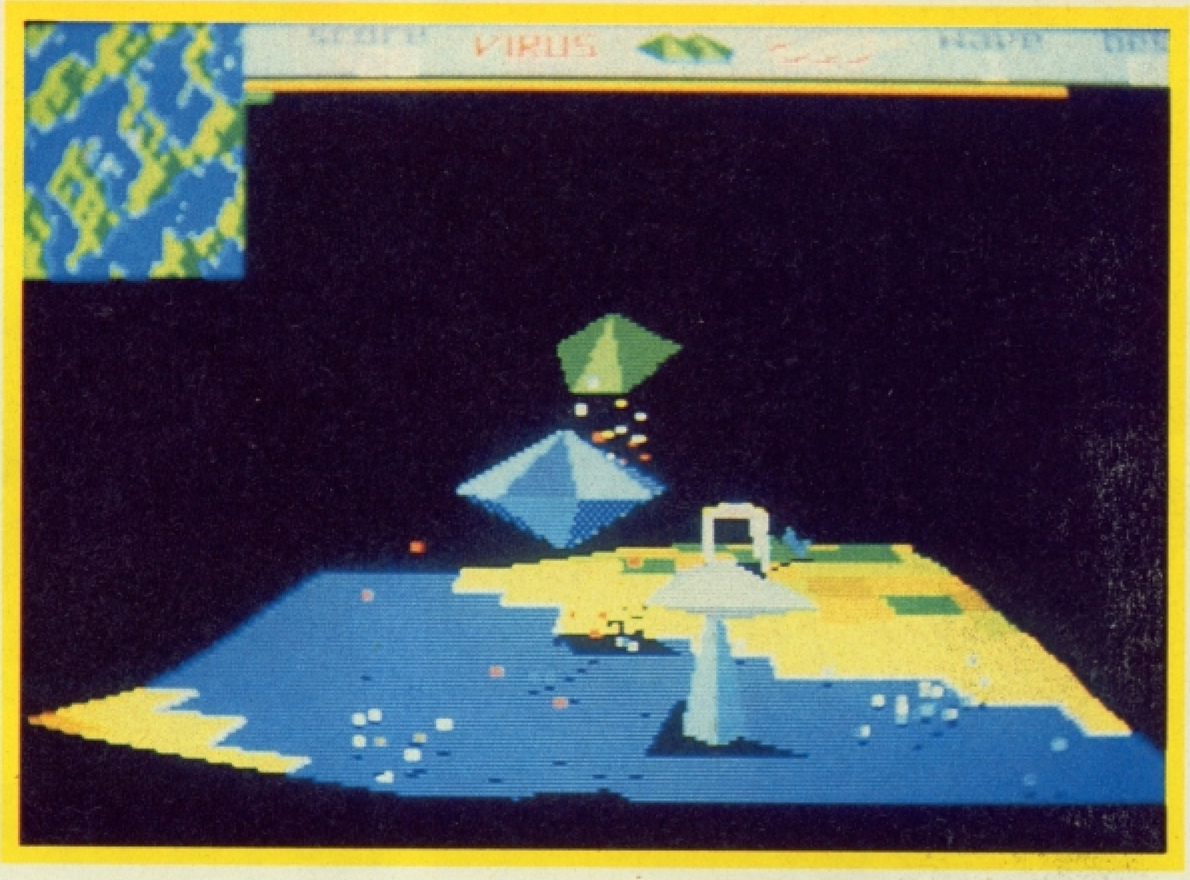
★ Don't fire the cannons just for the sake of it. Every bullet that misses results in a point being subtracted from your score.

★ Be careful and have lots of fun. (*What kind of tip do you call this?*— Ed).

is to attack them head on using a hoverplane — a kind of futuristic jet fighter.

As you may have guessed, *Virus* is a shoot 'em up. Nothing special there. What sets it apart from all other games is the way in which it's presented. *Virus* employs a revolutionary solid 3D graphics technique to display the game world in the most convincing manner yet to be seen in a computer game.

The hoverplane is viewed from the outside and operates on a remarkably simple 'tilt and burn' system. The ship, which looks rather like a squashed and elongated pyramid has an engine situated at the base of the craft. Applying thrust forces the hoverplane straight up as a stream of highly-coloured vapour shoots out from the exhaust port. Pushing the mouse forward and back will raise and lower the plane's nose, while left and right movements spin it round through



One less virus spreader.

360 degrees. In this manner, it's possible to tilt the plane at every conceivable angle and so travel in any direction you please. It's like *Thrust* with an extra dimension.

Learning to control the plane properly is a task that requires days of solid practice and plenty of patience.

The countryside is represented as an undulating series of hills and dips, broken down into many different coloured rectangles to give a lovely rural patchwork effect. Trees, houses and rotating radar towers make regular appearances on the landscape and help to make the whole thing more interesting graphically. Travelling between islands is not a problem, simply a matter of flying over the expanses of water that segregate them, and navigation aid is provided in the form of a map of the entire game area pinpointing your position at all times. The length of time you can thrust around is dictated by your fuel level, which dwindles away as you fly, and can only be replenished by returning to your home base.

The virus-spreading aliens begin to appear shortly after take off, and are split into eight specific types, each with their own characteristics. Airborne nasties such as the drones and pests fly randomly about the landscape, shooting away and generally being a nuisance. Thankfully these don't cause too much trouble. It's the ones that actually distribute the evil red virus that must be destroyed. Seeders, for example, wander around the landscape, spurting out deadly red dust wherever they go, while bombers drop virus cannisters from a great height onto the landscape below. Even though neither of these two will attack you, they must be killed immediately before they can pollute too much of the countryside, turning it a grisly red/brown colour, and any trees in the vicinity into strange hybrids. The aliens can be shot down using the nose-mounted cannon. Nastier types can be knocked out by firing one of the hoverplane's three homing missiles.

Defending the islands in this manner continues until the designated number of aliens have been destroyed, whereupon the current attack wave ends and bonus points are allocated for the amount of area that remains uninfected. The next attack wave brings more aggressive opponents, and more of them as well. Extra features to make life harder are added as the game progresses, such as higher levels of gravity, which means more thrust has to be used to keep the hoverplane airborne, at the expense of more fuel.

Graphically *Virus* is a masterpiece. The amazing attention to detail makes it one of the most attractive Amiga games yet to appear. Everything is faultless, from the way the landscape rises and falls smoothly under you as you glide past, to the way in which everything in the game, right down to the vapour trails from your own craft and the smoking remains of destroyed alien craft casts a perfect shadow on the landscape. Fly too high and you'll find a beautiful multi-layer parallax starfield. True, the game isn't quite as colourful as the Archie original, and some of the fancier graphic frills have had to be ommitted, but that was only to be expected.

Sound is adequate, with the lack



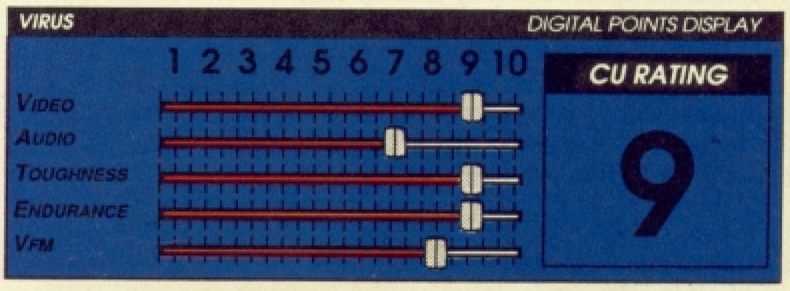
Ha! Caught one seeding.

of music being made up for by excellent thrusting effects and a gorgeous sampled splash when vapour trails hit the water. All this, however simply pales away when compared to the sheer genius of the gameplay itself. There's a lot of solid practising to be done before the pig of a control method is grasped, but once it is I defy anyone to leave the game alone for more than an hour.

Virus is so simple and yet so innovative that it completely changes the face of the shoot 'em up as we know it.

Gary Whitta

AMIGA



WIN A



PORTABLE C.D.

Firebird were so delighted that we honoured *Virus* with a Superstar that we leapt in and squeezed a compo out of them. Strike while the iron's hot and that kind of thing. So the deal is, we have a portable CD player to give away to anybody who hates Bros and can answer a few pifflingly easy questions set by a group of idiots. Ten marginally less lucky runners-up will also receive a copy of the game. Right here's your starter for ten, based on the rather tasteless topic of disease . . .

1) Who programmed the first Amiga virus?
2) Which of these three is the disease responsible for killing all the seals
(a) Canine distemper
(b) Dillon's syndrome
(c) Feline dermatitis
3) What virus recently caused the deaths of two people in Broadcasting House?
4) What disease recently laid up Big Audio Dynamite's Mick Jones and Nigel Mansell?

Answers on a dead seal to Commodore User, Priory Court, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. Competition closes October 14th and it's not open to CU freelancers either, Gary Whitta. Buy your own — we pay you enough.

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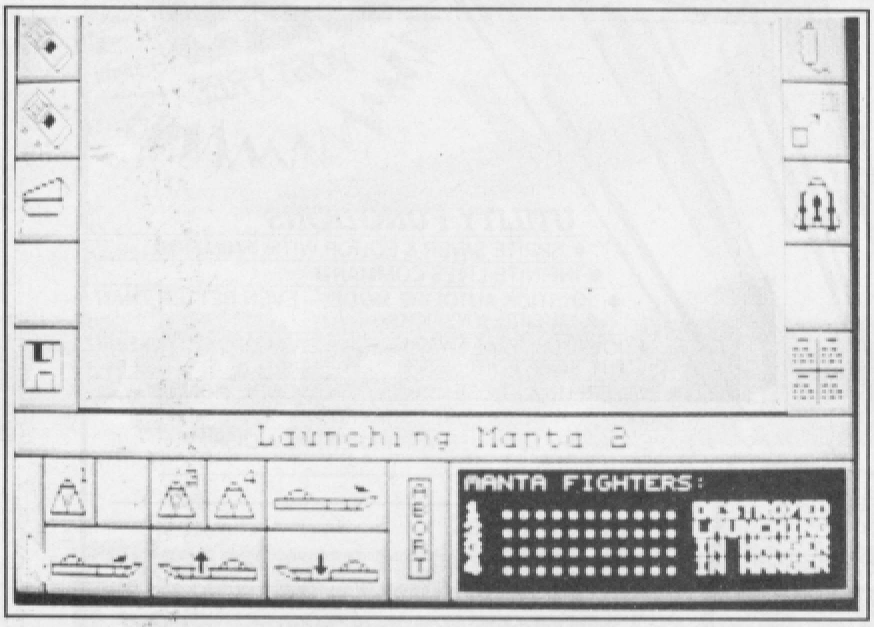
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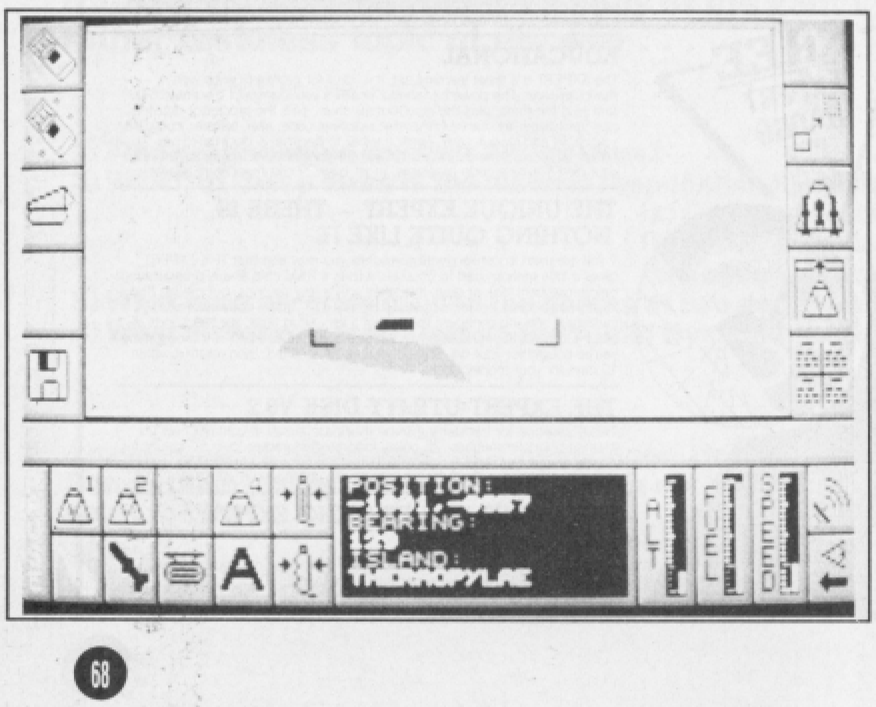
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Dear 'ol Gaz Whitta went absolutely bananas over Rainbird's *Carrier Command* when he reviewed it back in August. Since then he's been playing it and playing it like there's no tomorrow, so what better person to ask for tips on this superlative wargame? So here, with a little help from Sinclair User's Ed, Graham Taylor, is the definite players guide to . . .

CARRIER COMMAND



A screenshot from Carrier Command (courtesy Duncan Evans school of obvious caption writing.)



Manta 2 caught in the act of taking off.

GETTING STARTED

Looking at the map will reveal three different types of islands, red, blue and green. The blue ones are the ones that you control (initially only Vulcan is yours), while the red ones are the hostile islands occupied by ACC Omega's forces. The green ones in between are neutral islands, and so these are the ones you must set about capturing.

The first steps to building your network are fantastically simple. First set your course for a nearby island such as Byrne (named after Telecomsoft supremo Paula Byrne) and sail there. When you arrive, stop dead using the hand icon and go to Walrus control. Here load a Walrus with full fuel and a factory ACCB. Launch the Walrus and (quite important this bit) remember to drop the ACCB as close to the centre of the island as you can. Once this is done, retrieve the Walrus and set your course for another nearby island and carry out the same procedure, again making a factory island. When this is done, set about making the next five islands you capture defence islands. This is very important, although you won't realise it until much later on in the game. Your home island must be protected at all costs, and that's why the defence islands should be there.

One of the keys to winning the game, after you've set your basic foundations as described above, is to capture the island called Fulcrum. Take a look at the radar map, and home in on the island in the very centre, where two grid lines cross. There you'll find a group of islands that form a ring around it. Although this isn't shown at the beginning, all the islands in that ring interconnect and all feed into Fulcrum directly, which means it is one of the best defended and best supplied islands in the game; capture it and you're a big step closer to victory.

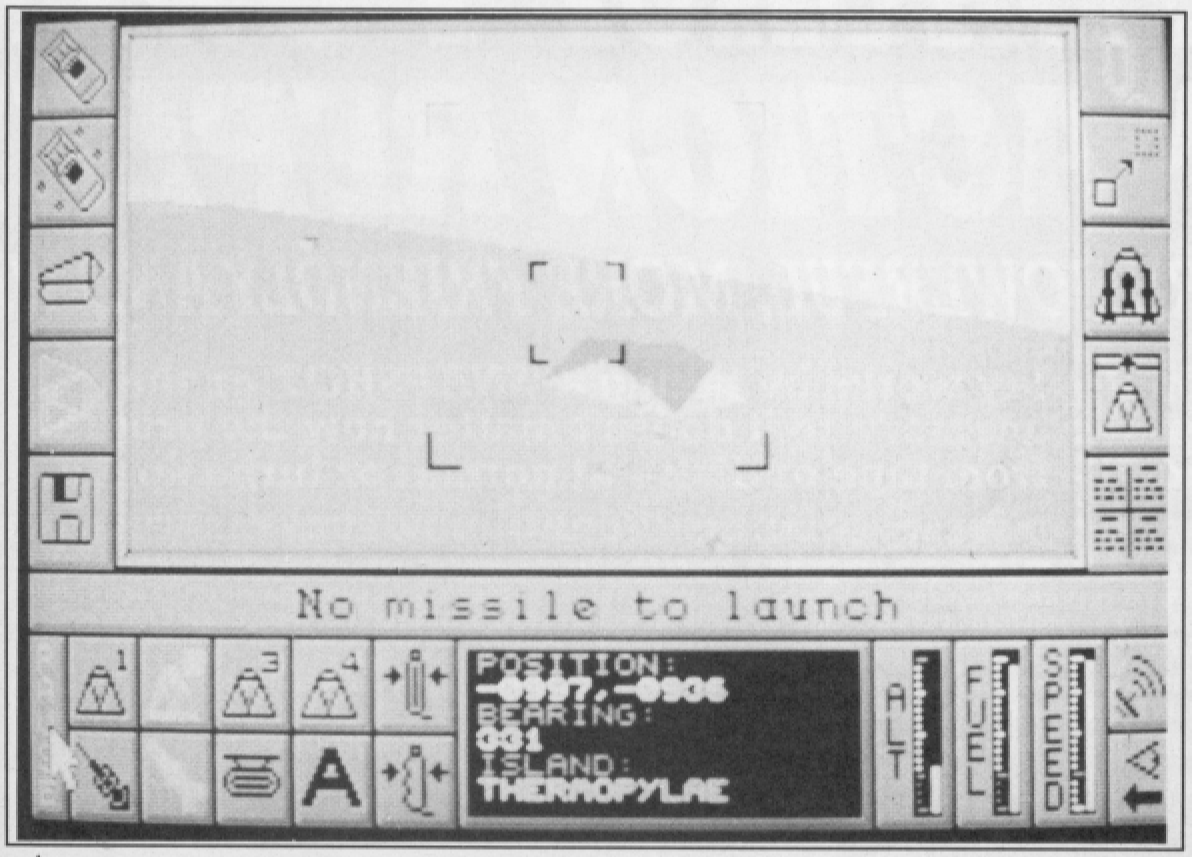
CAPTURING ISLANDS

By the time you get to Fulcrum, chances are the enemy network will have grown to be pretty close to yours, so the time to start capturing the enemy islands is now. Find an enemy island that is well connected to the resources network and set a course for it. As soon as you get within range of it, go to drone control and deploy a complete set, one at each side. This will slow you down but will also provide insurance against any early attack.

Sail as close as possible, and turn the carrier round so that you are facing away from the island. Go to Carrier Defence and launch a viewing drone. As soon as the volcano-like fighter launcher comes into view, let it have it with a couple of missiles. (You MUST be facing away from the island for a drone to see it, as they are launched from the rear of the

play TO WIN

AMIGA



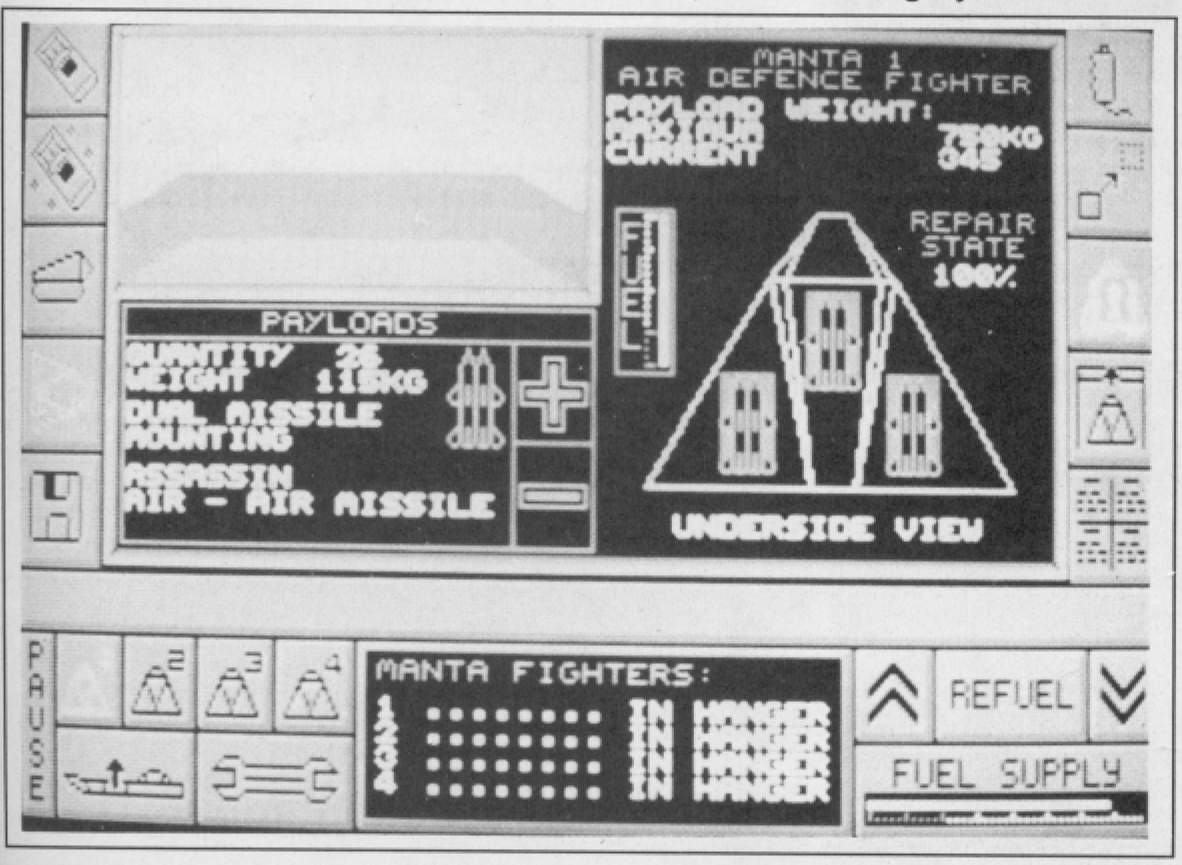
Several irate Manta missiles zoom towards an enemy batcave . . .

Carrier). Now go to Manta control and kit one out with as many missiles as it can carry. Launch the Manta, turn on the radar display and begin to circle the island, looking for the Command Centre, or Batcave as it's otherwise known. When you've found it, fly round to the side of the island that it's closest to. This way, when you attack you cut the amount of time that you're actually over the island to a minimum. Now fly towards the batcave at maximum velocity and target the missile cursor on it. As soon as it flashes, let loose a missile. After a two second delay it'll flash again, whereupon you fire another missile. Carry on like this until you've fired ALL your missiles. The batcave will explode and the island will become neutral. Any enemy fighters that are airborne will fly around harmlessly, as they have no command centre and no more fighters will be launched. Retrieve the Manta quickly and then deploy a Walrus to capture the island.

NEVER use a Walrus to attack an enemy island. They're sitting ducks for the enemy fighters.

Carry on capturing enemy islands like this, whittling away at the network piece by piece. Don't worry if the enemy is beginning to get close to your home island; your defence islands should hold them off long enough for you to win the game. When you finally reach the enemy base, don't try to attack Omega as it's far too powerful. Go instead for the home island, using the same technique, but using your surface to surface missiles and Carrier laser to damage the island as much as you possibly can before launching any Mantas.

Load your Manta like this before an attack mission.



GENERAL TIPS

● The game strategy above is all very well, but it can all fall to pieces if you make silly mistakes. Remember to keep your stockpile island on the move. If you run out of fuel while not in range of the stockpile island you've had it.

● Make use of the priority settings, and always keep Carrier fuel on high priority, with Manta and Walrus fuel on medium, as they use very little fuel in relation. Keep the Manta missiles and ACCBs on high priority at all times.

● Keep your Mantas and Walruses loaded full of equipment even while in dock, as it's possible to get more equipment into the holds that way.

● As soon as a Manta returns to base, bring it back down into its hangar. Mantas on deck slow the Carrier down. Also, repairs can only be initiated in the hangar.

● When in control of a Manta or a Walrus, keep its inset radar on all the time; it can give lifesaving information on the position of enemy craft. Never launch more than one Walrus or Manta at the same time (especially while in enemy waters).

● As soon as you make any kind of progress, no matter how small, SAVE THE GAME!! If you die at least you have something to fall back on.

● Don't waste time by trying to land Mantas on island runways. It's much easier just to recall it back to the Carrier.

● Viewing drones are useful not just in conjunction with missiles. They're also an invaluable aid when trying to get the idea of the layout of an enemy island before attacking it.

AMIGA

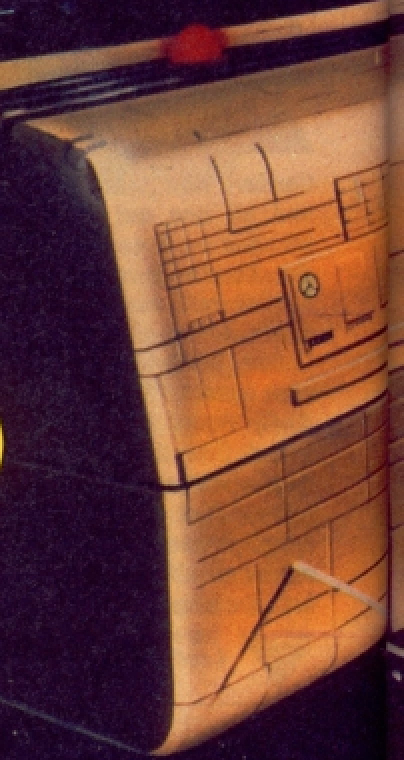
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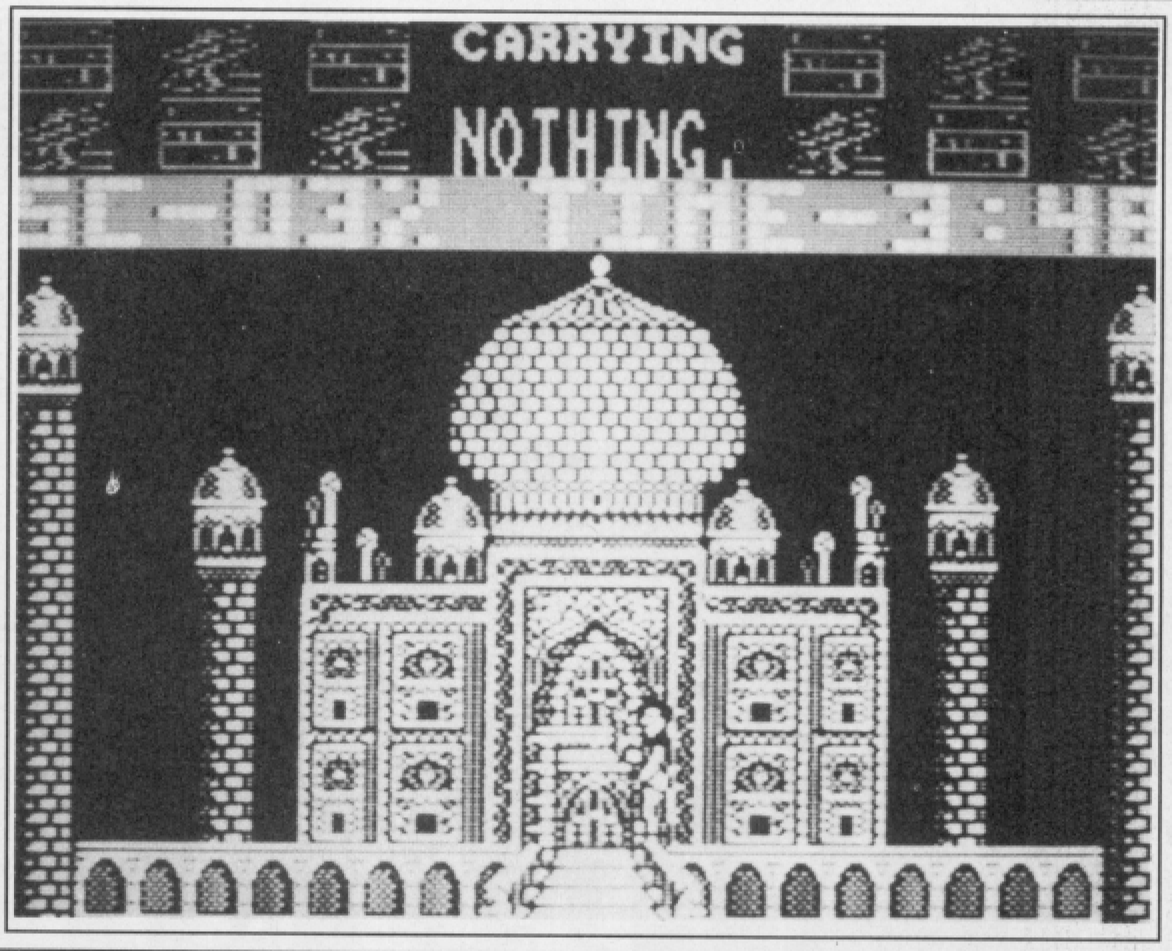
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64/128
Codemasters
Price: £4.99



RACE AGAINST TIME

Charity returns to the philanthropic world of software once more with Codemasters' long-awaited 64 version of *Race Against Time*. I say long awaited because the Speccy version appeared some three months ago. The delay is all the more surprising when you realise there's little difference between the two, graphically or otherwise.

RAT isn't the first charity tape by any means. We've had *Off The Hook* for drug abuse, *Soft Aid* and *WOW* a War on Want tape. *RAT* is the first game to have been specifically written for charitable reasons with proceeds going to Sport Aid.

I must admit I'm a bit dubious about charity events of this nature. I didn't Run the World, I didn't even run West Hampstead; I didn't go to Live Aid, or even watch much of it on TV. I didn't wear a red nose for comic relief, though I must confess to having generously purchased a goat called Sandy who probably ended up on the menu of the Eritrean Liberation Front shortly afterwards. Still my conscience was eased along with everybody else's for a while.

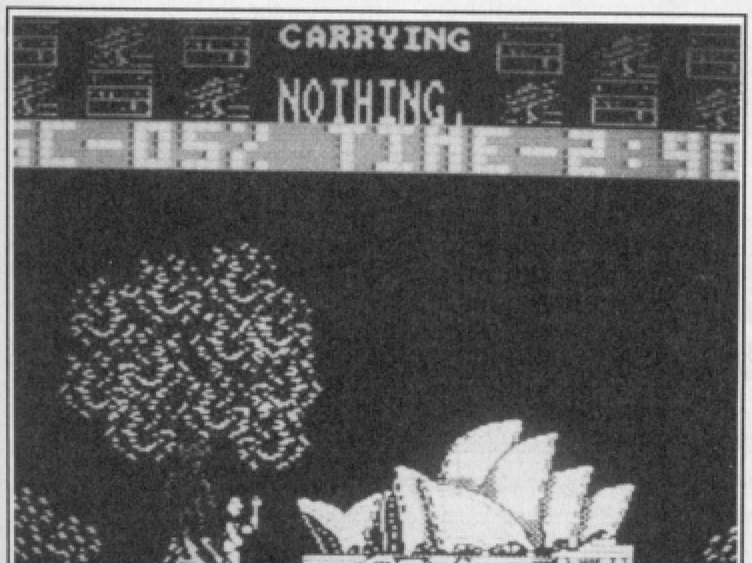
My point here is simply that despite all the disposable income that exists in the West the solution to the problems of the Third World should not be left to well-meaning groups. As to whether you should buy *RAT* for its entertainment value alone, I have to report that you're not getting anything special for your money here. It's written by the Oliver twins and it takes the form of a rather fatuous pick up and drop arcade adventure with your runner appearing in various locations around the world using a stool he found in New York to climb mountains in Nepal and so on.

If you want to make a statement on the West's greed and exploitation of the Third World then a charity software tape may not be the best answer. If you want to provide some much needed and very urgent relief then you could do worse than buying the *Race Against Time*, charity is, after all, supposed to begin at home. But it really only amounts to fire-fighting.

Mike Pattenden

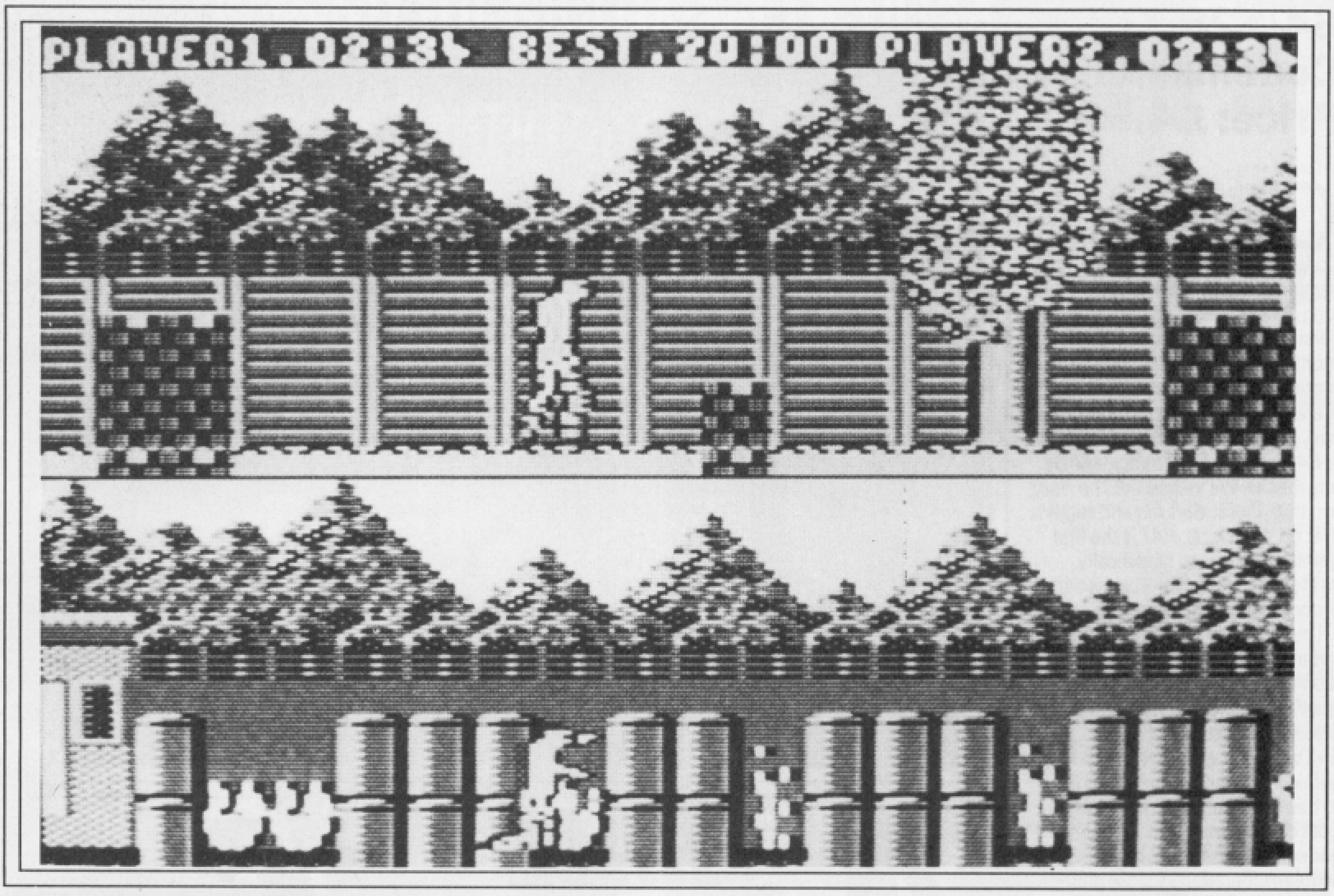
RACE AGAINST TIME	DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY
Video	
Audio	
Toughness	
Endurance	
VFM	
CU RATING	5

◀ *Take a haddock to Sydney (or something).*



▼ *Stick a baguette up your nose in Paris.*





▲ *Warning! Playing could be more exhausting than the real thing . . .*

NATO ASSAULT COURSE

64/128
CRL
Price: £9.95 cass

This game is so completely and unutterably boring I don't even think it's worthy of a good slagging. But our duty is to inform, so here goes.

NATO Assault Course is the third combat school clone to appear so far and it's by far the worse.

The basic game is timed against the clock. It's one of those split screen efforts with you on the top and your computer opponent below — a sort of brawny version of University Challenge. Progress is made through the course by the old tried and trusted waggle like a loony method. Your little man, decked out in full combat gear, begins to walk then progresses into a slow trot until he meets the first obstacle — a low wall. The idea is to jump onto the wall, run along it, then jump off the other end. Bad timing results in such painful damage to your kneecaps that you pass out for a few seconds before getting the chance to make another attempt.

Walls aren't the only completely boring obstacles in your path. Next up is the barbed wire which you have to crawl under on your belly. Pulling the joystick down puts your man into crawl mode — it goes without saying that you don't stand up until you get to the other end. Once you're through the barbed wire you'll be anxious to make up for lost time and catch up on the computer opponent, who is by now about five miles in front. Bursting into a slow jog, you will encounter the next thrilling obstacle — the slippery oil which will cause you to fall on your bum — I bet this is just like the real thing.

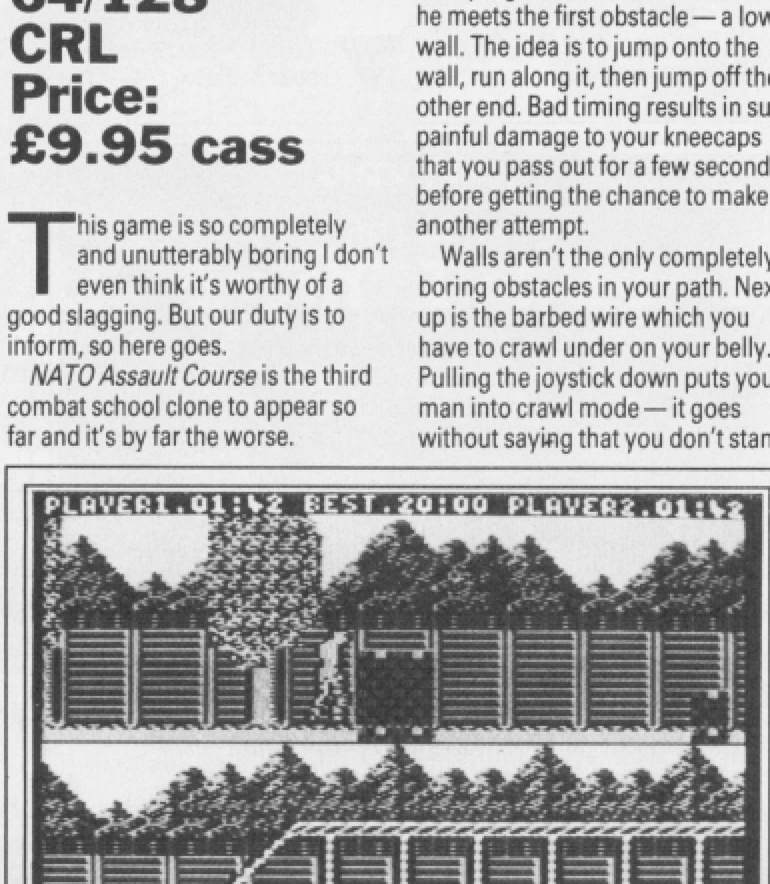
Now we get to the really dangerous stuff — dummy targets that actually shoot at you. These bullets won't kill you, they just stun you for a few seconds — watch the clock tick away as the screen goes black. Your only defence against the shooting targets is the amazing hand gun. So called because it looks like the bullets are actually coming out of your index finger.

Further incredibly dangerous and exciting things that get in your way include flaming oil drums, quicksand, mud, swimming pools, rope ladders and more brick walls. Failure to negotiate any of them results in four or five seconds of blank screen during which you can watch your opponent get further and further ahead.

Should you get tired of competing against the clock (heaven forbid) you can choose to play any one of four army opponents all of whom have identical bonehead features to the rookie under your control. The best — Colonel T Jones Forsythe — flies over the obstacles like he was born doing it, I decided there was more to be gained from watching Jones Forsythe than actually playing the game myself.

If you don't find the course tedious enough already, you can make up still more of your own using the course editor. But you'd have to be a masochist to do that.

Ken McMahon

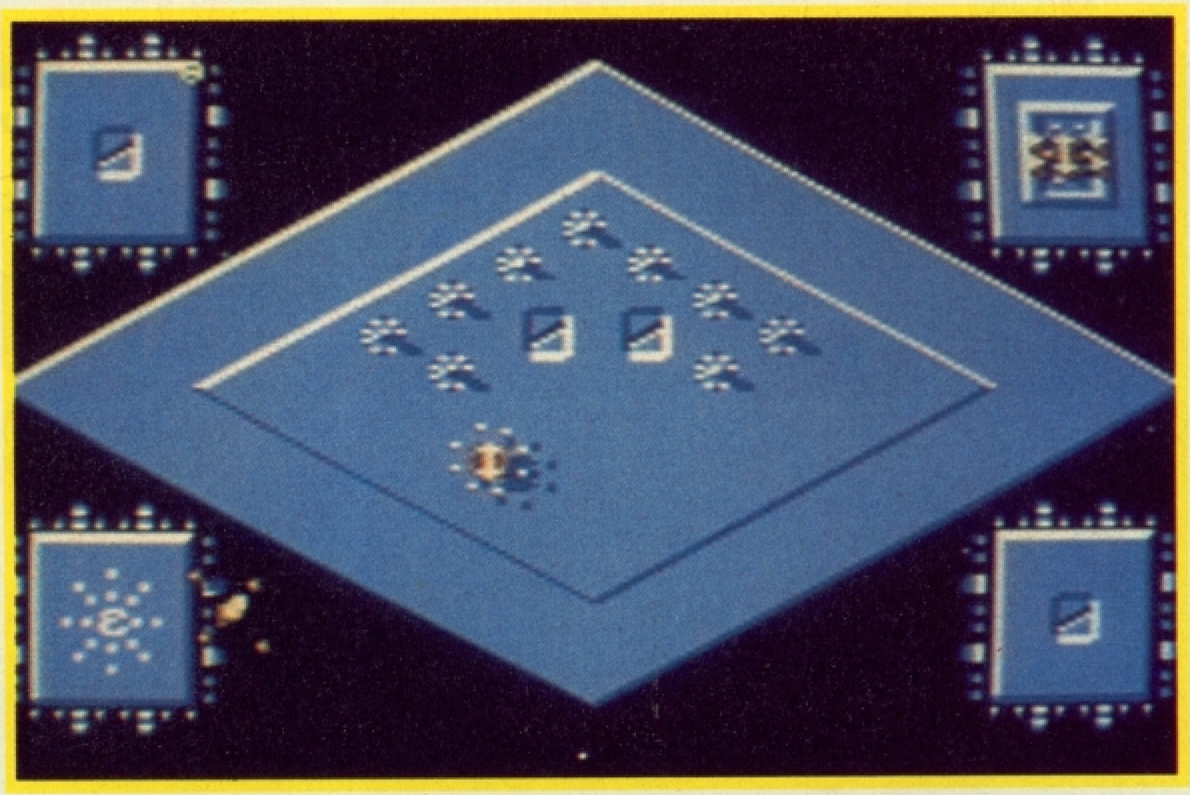


NATO ASSAULT COURSE — *DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY*

	Rating (1–10)
Video	2
Audio	2
Toughness	7
Endurance	2
VFM	2

CU RATING

2



Bas relief graphics, mutating aliens, but no blasting.

INTE

Four those of you who've been wondering what Andrew Braybrook's being doing since he left Hewson, here's the answer. He's been writing *Intensity* — and the wait has most definitely been worth it.

Intensity has a lot of the Braybrook trademarks to it — bas-relief graphics, swirling and gyrating nasties, good sound effects — but, surprisingly, it's not a fast reaction blaster, (incredulous gasp) it doesn't scroll and there's no firing to be done.

Better get on with the story before you slope off in disgust. The objective is to rescue colonists from a space station which has been laid siege to by hordes of nasty aliens. The space station consists of five layers each with sixteen platforms — that makes 80 screens to complete. The scenario doesn't sound promising but the game's complexity makes up for it.

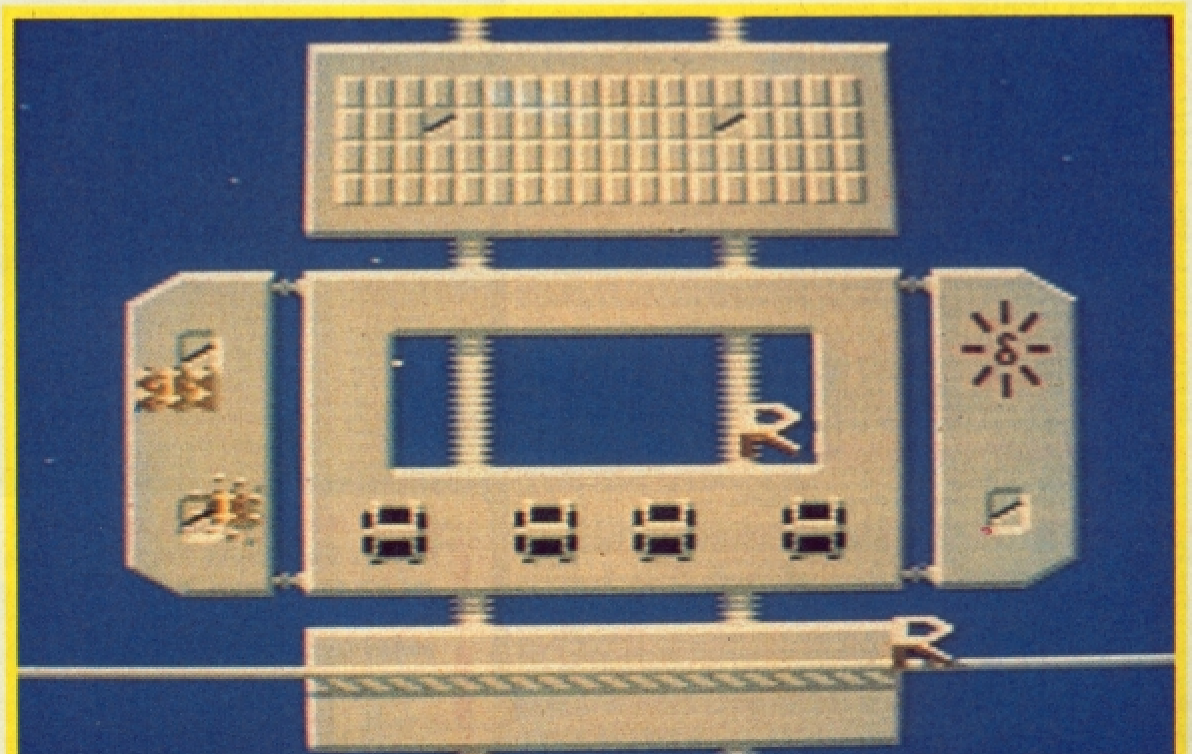
Your craft is a Skimmer which hovers above the surface of the platform. The Skimmer itself doesn't pick up colonists, it controls a Drone which, when placed in an appropriate position, attracts colonists, who then come up from their hidey-holes and make their plodding way towards it. By the way, the colonists are graphically disappointing, amounting to mere blobs.

When the required number of blobs, sorry, colonists are safely aboard the Drone, you guide it to the flashing Exit marker and, hey presto, that platform is complete. Only 79 more to go.

Here's how it all works. The Skimmer moves the Drone by placing itself on the spot it wants the drone to go to. Pressing the fire-button makes the Drone come to the Skimmer. But the Skimmer must move before the Drone arrives because, if they collide, both of them go up in smoke. Moving the Drone can be done any number of times in order to choose the best positions to pick up colonists as they emerge.

On later levels, gathering colonists becomes more difficult due to the gaps in the terrain. But bridges can be extended over gaps by landing the Drone on top of a bridge control arrow. The bridge will automatically retract after use.

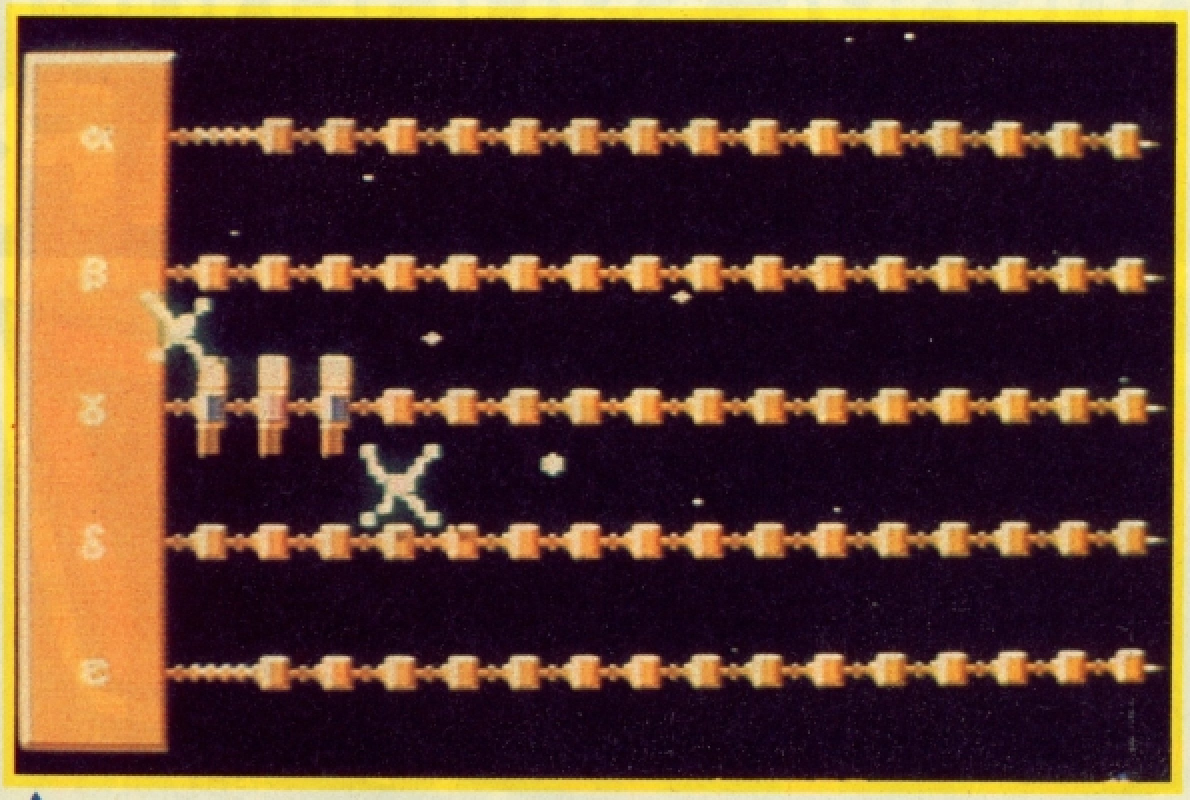
As I was saying, the Exit marker flashes after five, ten or fifteen colonists have been collected. If you exit with five, you're transported to



MUTATING ALIENS

These start out as harmless little spores floating in towards the platform surface. When a spore lands, it becomes a Stalker, it then gets a little nastier and becomes a Podule, then a Tracker and finally a Nuclon. Nuclons are Stalkers which have grabbed a colonist — you can see the colonist in the middle of the gyrating nasty. This is when they explode, but they still carry the colonist's desire to get to the Drone. At this point, contact with either the Drone or Skimmer will cause them to be destroyed or downgraded. Pretty nasty stuff, eh?

In fact, the only good thing about all this mutating is that your score more points if you zap an alien in a higher mutated form. Similarly, you get more points for collecting colonists on higher graded levels.



Status screen shows levels completed.

NSITY

64/128
Firebird Software
Price: £9.95/cass £12.95 disk

an easier platform on an adjacent layer (that layer's Greek letter will be indicated on the Exit marker).

If you ignore that and wait to exit after collecting the colonists, you're transported to a more difficult platform on the other adjacent layer. After fifteen colonists you stay on the same layer but move up one platform towards the shuttle. But as you get closer to the shuttle, transfer paths to others become increasingly rare.

So it makes sense to collect fifteen colonists before you exit, despite the greater risks from aliens. Not just because you stay on the same layer but because you have the chance of collecting one 'R' or Resource Unit for every colonist collected. R's are worth collecting because they enable you to buy more Skimmers and Drones.

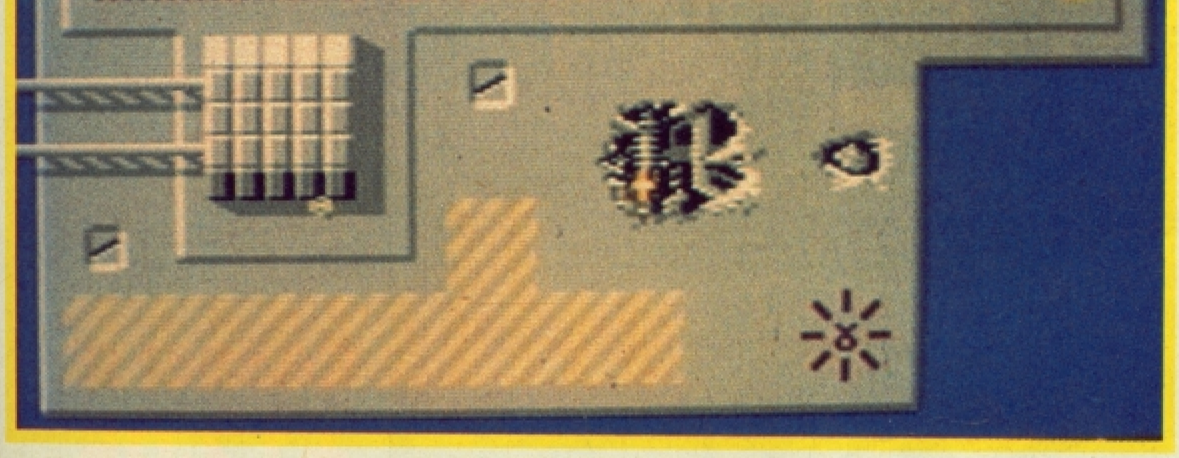
Skimmers and Drones come in three types — gamma, beta and alpha — which increase in terms of speed and hover height. Both are important assets. And, of course, you need more money to buy the better ones. Added to that is the fact that better class equipment isn't available immediately — you have to wait a certain number of 'time segments' before they become ready for use.

Anyway, back to speed and hover height. Speed is crucial because the only way your Skimmer can zap aliens is to bump into them. It's also got to be pretty agile to catch the R's

INTENSITY — DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY

	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Video	7
Audio	7
Toughness	8
Endurance	8
VFM	8

CU RATING: 8



whenever they appear: Aliens zap them if they get there first. Even if they don't, R's burn up of their own accord after a short time.

Hover height is also important because various elements of the terrain are at different heights. Of course, you get no impression of height because the view is a downward one.

I enjoyed *Intensity* very much once I'd got over the initial disappointment of not having anything to fire at. It's a big and complex game that's well worth the time and effort involved in getting to know it well. My only real gripe is the use of Greek letters on the Exits — it's almost impossible to make them out.

Apart from that, this is another impressive Braybrook offering, and an indication of the progress his games are making.

Bohdan Buciak



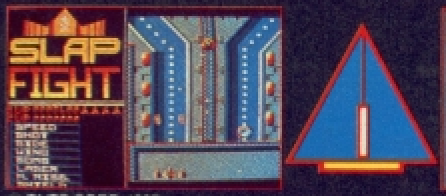
THE ARCADE COMPILATION OF THE YEAR





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RASTAN The Warrior King. Lands that produce men of legend, dragon slayers, lie in his shadow – guardians of evil fear his fire spewing sword, the axe he wields as swift as lightning. State of the art programming makes a true simulation of the Arcade for your home micro, enjoy superb graphics and realistic action as RASTAN takes on a world of dangers – magical wizards, fire breathing lions, bats, snakes, skeletons and finally the living dead. Is it more than you can handle?



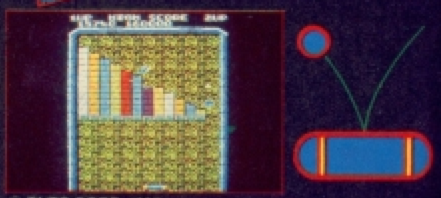
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SLAP FIGHT You are the pilot of the Slapfighter and must destroy the evil alien swarms which confront you, wave after deadly wave on the ever hostile planet of Orac. To aid you in your challenge collect icons and substantially increase your fire power and speed. Superb graphics and split second timing give this game an addictive edge.



© TAITO CORP. 1988

RENEGADE REBEL WITHOUT A CAUSE? In the knife-edge world of the vigilante there is no place to rest, no time to think – but look sharp – there is always time to die! From the city subways to the gangland ghettos you will always encounter the disciples of evil who's mission it is to exterminate the only man on earth who dares to throw down the gauntlet on their path – the Renegade. PLAY RENEGADE...PLAY MEAN!



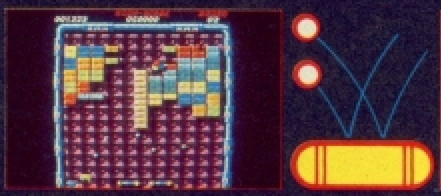
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ARKANOID The era and time of this story is unkown. After the mothership "Arkanoid" was destroyed, a spacecraft "Vaus" scrambled away, only to be trapped in the void... You control the Vaus and have to penetrate 32 levels and then confront the "Dimension Changer" whom you must destroy in order to reverse time and ressurect the "Arkanoid." Frantic action and split second timing combine to produce the most addictive and compulsive game.



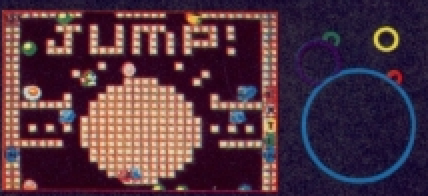
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FLYING SHARK HOT FROM THE ARCADES. Flying Shark is the definitive conversion of this shoot-em-up, chart-topping classic hit from Taito. Develop your strategy as you face swarms of enemy planes, tanks, gun emplacements and a host of sea-borne craft as you bomb, blast and battle your way into arcade history.



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ARKANOID REVENGE OF DOH. Eons have passed...yet despite apparent annihilation in the original ARKANOID game, Dimension-controlling force "DOH" has come back to life, and occupying the huge space-craft ZARG, has entered our Universe. ARKANOID type space-fighter MIXTEC runs through long forgotten computer data until it finds the answer to his threat..."VAUS 2" is launched and speeds towards the threatening alien presence, before it can extract its revenge..."The Revenge of Doh"



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BUBBLE BOBBLE TAITO'S NO 1 ARCADE HIT IS HERE! Meet Bub and Bob, two of the busiest beasties you ever saw, as they battle their way across 100 levels of controlled chaos in search of their girlfriends (ahhh!). Jump around picking up goodies and secret weapons as you seek to outsmart your enemies, but beware...hang around too long and you'll face Baron von Blubba, from whom there's no escape!



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LEGEND OF KAGE Legend has it that long ago in Japan the beautiful Princess Kiri was kidnapped by the evil Dragon King, and Kage, a young ninja who was walking with her in the forest at the time, was given the formidable task of rescuing her. You must help Kage in his quest through the forest to the Dragon King's palace, gain entrance, find Kiri and take her to safety, while avoiding the Dragon King's ninja guards.

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STREET SPORTS SOCCER

STREET SPORTS SOCCER — DIGITAL POINTS DISPLAY

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

VIDEO
AUDIO
TOUGHNESS
ENDURANCE
VFM

CU RATING

5

SPS is the third Epyx offering set in the streets of New York (or whatever) and if you ask me it's rather a case of selling coal to a coal mine. A game needs to be something special if it is to succeed in the software football scene where around about 30 titles are currently available.

I will admit *SPS* takes me back to my days of car park football when I was in school, but it doesn't quite make the grade. To start with you select the pitch you want to play on, street or park, each with the customary obstacles like oil and manholes, although some of the hazards supplied by man's best friends are not to be found. Rather than five-a-side or the more traditional eleven, your team consists of three members handpicked from nine of the local deliquents, both boys and girls. They all have special skills and weaknesses but as in real life there's one player who causes everyone to scream 'bags first pick' and a person who trips up on their own feet who the captains are all to happy to give to the other side as a hindrance.

The American unfamiliarity with this bastion of British sports is clearly displayed in the game text when 'hottest soccer moves' means passing and heading. A few automatic moves have been included such as overhead kicks (well that's what it looks like to me) but the sprite quality places a large dampener on the effect.

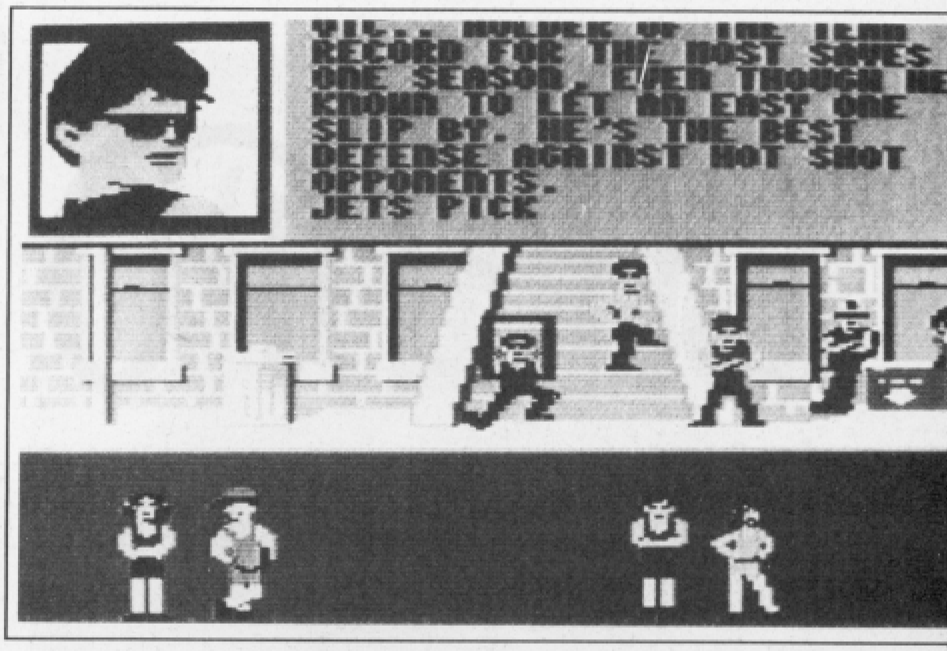
One feature which gives *SPS* a minor advantage is the ability to change the team member you control by pressing fire and up on the joystick. This way the player under your guidance isn't left standing on the far side of the screen with you mentally willing the computer to give you access to someone nearer the ball. Still, the feature doesn not make up for the appallingly bad flip-screen scrolling which totally fails to follow the ball, or the players for that matter, and makes the game very hard, not to mention confusing.

Passing is pretty straightforward, hit the ball to the nearest player, but when you take a shot the ball can be aimed at either the upper corner, middle or lower corner of the goal (not that your shot is always on target). Offsides are also included in the package but on a three-a-side game offsides don't exactly work too well so it's best to rush the defence rather than pass upfield. Penalties are awarded for any bumping near the goal mouth, though I never came across one in all the time I played.

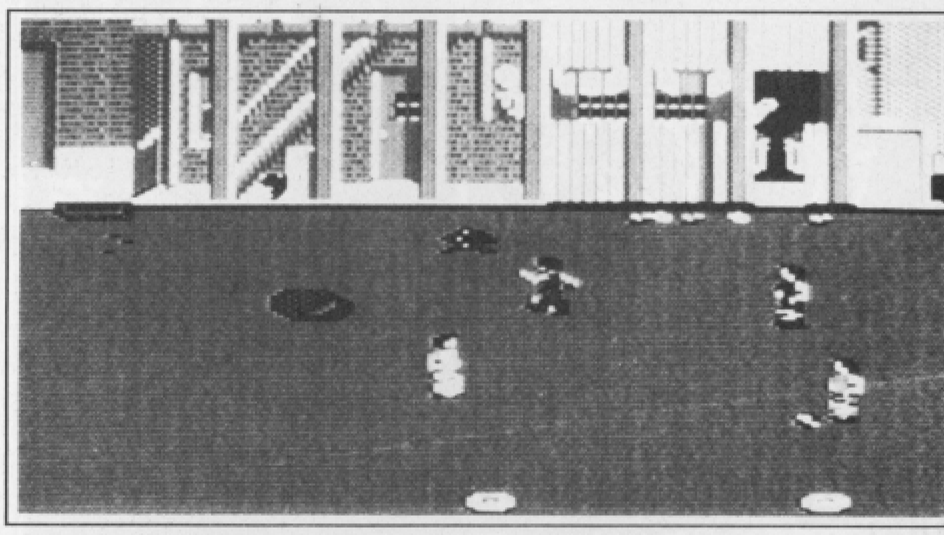
Extra features are abundant such as tossing a nickel to choose who gets first pick. When a goal is scored the scoring player plus the nearest other team member run at each other, jump and slap hands in mid-air with a mistimed smack sound.

SPS is not the best, nor is it the worst football game on the 64. It plays sluggishly and the sprites are too slow and chunky to give the game any real action feeling. If you ask me your money's better spent on *Microsoccer*.

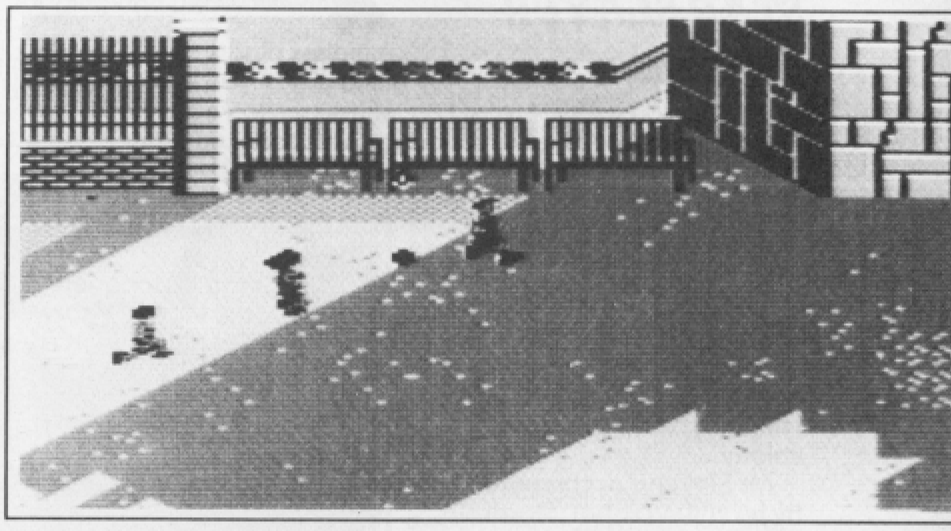
Mark Patterson



Meet the gang. Naff off guys!



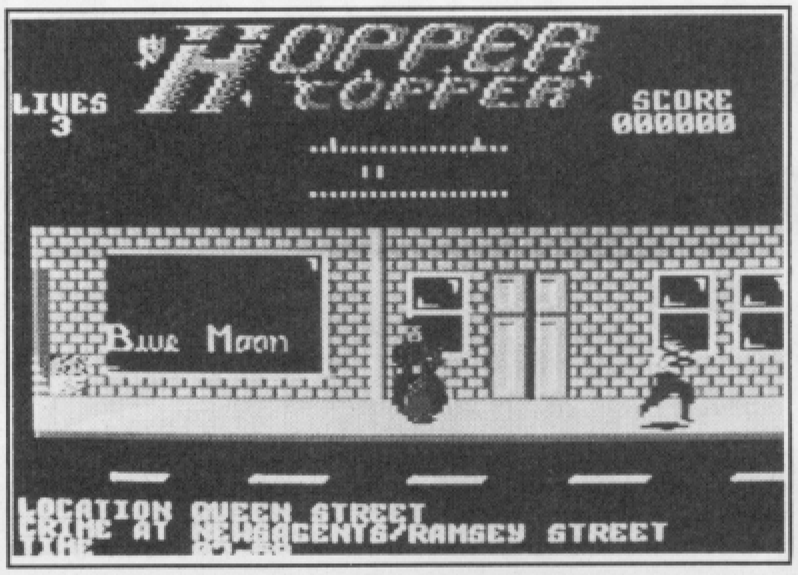
Break her leg!

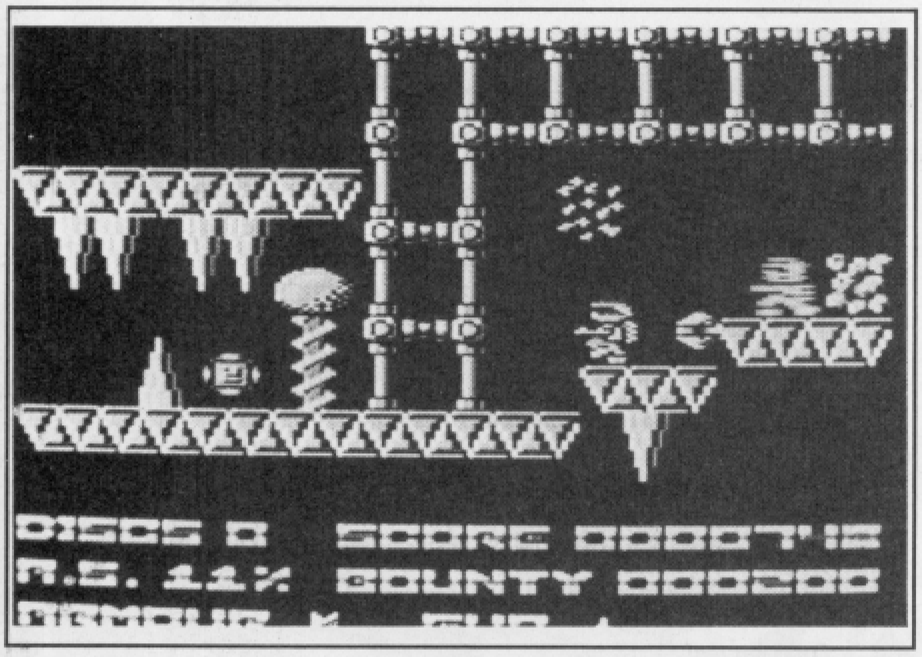


A lark in the park.

64/128
Epyx
Price:
£9.99 cass
£14.99 disk

CHEAPO ROUND-UP





▲ *Star Slayer*

STAR SLAYER

Silverbird

Star Slayer is an intergalactic bounty hunter, hired by the Galactic Federation to infiltrate colonies which have been overrun by GAP 'the scum' — baddies, presumably.

Star Slayer must negotiate the flick-screen colony, shooting enough baddies to earn the necessary bounty for teleportation to the next colony.

Mr Slayer is accompanied by his rotund robot, Stardroid, who fires in unison with his master, and can collect extra armour and ammo en route to increase his efforts and prolong his single life.

This pallid *Cybernoid* clone provides a reasonable blast for one or two goes, but soon grows tiresome. You're constantly attacked by hordes of scummy types and death arrives all too swiftly, if you aren't careful.

Those who enjoy mapping are well catered for, and the mindless blasters will have a field day. If you like a bit more substance to your games, though, take a gander elsewhere.**(5)**

HOPPER COPPER

Silverbird

More nonsense from Silverbird, I'm afraid; *Hopper Copper* follows the unlikely scenario of a policeman whose only option, when faced with a dangerous gang of thugs, is to give chase on a child's Space Hopper.

Set in a small town, a map of which is displayed on the inlay, the player's task is to try and defeat the gang by bouncing on them, knocking them unconscious, and leaving them to be picked up by the local gendarmerie.

The streets scroll past horizontally, and pushing up or pulling down at a junction enters roads at right angles to the one you're on, a little like *Laurel and Hardy* (if you were mad enough to buy it) or *Deathwish* (ditto).

This simple gameplay leaves a lot to be desired, and there are very few frills or thrills along the way. Simple game, simple graphics, simply awful.**(2)**

INTERNATIONAL RUGBY

Codemasters

Something of a first, this rugby game on the 64. And about time too. While it isn't the prettiest thing you've ever seen *IR* does prove to be reasonably playable.

Really though it's little different in style from the many American Football games on the market with the ball being thrown at the snap of the button and the perspective only changing when the ball is kicked over the bar. More for the Tongans amongst you than the All Blacks we'd say.**(6)**

▼ *Int Rugby*



CHEAPO ROUND-UP

LIGHTFORCE
Rack It

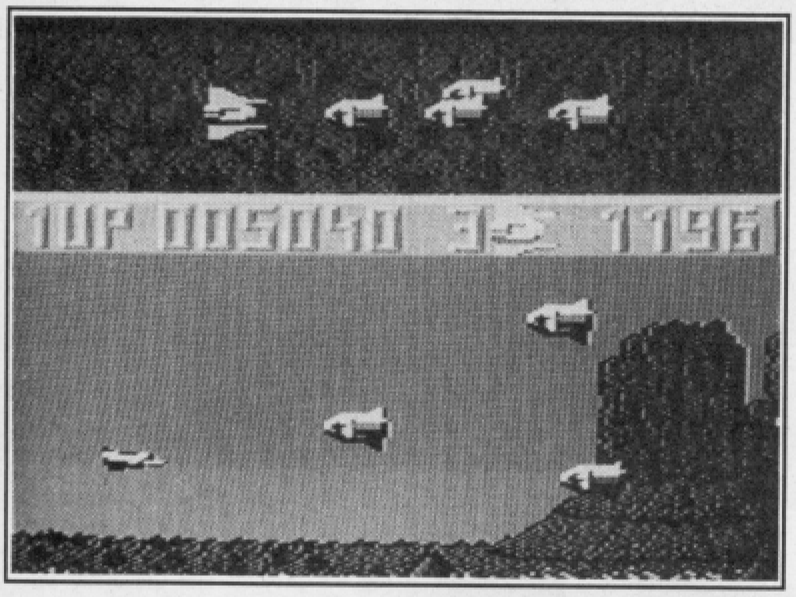
One of the best features of the two releases that appeared on the FTL label published by Gargoyle was Rob Hubbard's music. The game took the shape of a vertical shoot 'em up and really looks a bit dated now when you compare it to the likes of *Io, Armalyte* and *Katakis.* Oh no, you can't compare it to *Katakis* anymore can you?**(6)**

5th GEAR
Rack It

This is something of a vehicular shoot 'em up for Datsun drivers we're afraid, though not really in the *Road Blasters* mould. In fact you're competing in an illegal car race.

However there's more faults in this than an Irish kit car. The gameplay screen is confined to a strip about the width of a Radio 1 sun visor. Add to that fiddly car control and dull gameplay and you're better off saving you money on ... **(4)**

▼ Sanxion



SANXION
Rack It

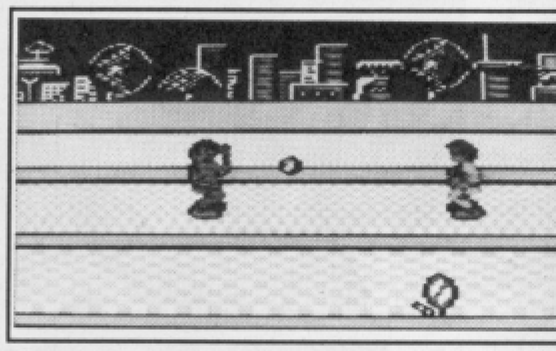
This was *Thalamus'* first game released way back when Andrew 'Suedehead' Wright was running it. It was also Stavros Fasoulas' debut shoot 'em up and a pretty good effort it was too.

Ten levels of testing blasting with some diverting bonus screens in between. Add to that some very smooth parallax and bright, clean looking graphics and you have the re-release of the month by a long way.**(9)**

SHOCKWAY RIDER
Rack It

Released some five months after *Lightforce, Shockway Rider* took its inspiration from 2000AD. Set in a Mega City style metropolis populated by punks and freaks your objective was to go full circle on the walkways which ran round the place. A bit like running the hoop in Halo Jones.

Naturally there were all manner of nasties trying to stop you, and there's plenty of dodging and brick throwing to be done. Again a little bit dated but good clean fun all the same.**(7)**



Shockway Rider ▶

SCORPION
Rack-It

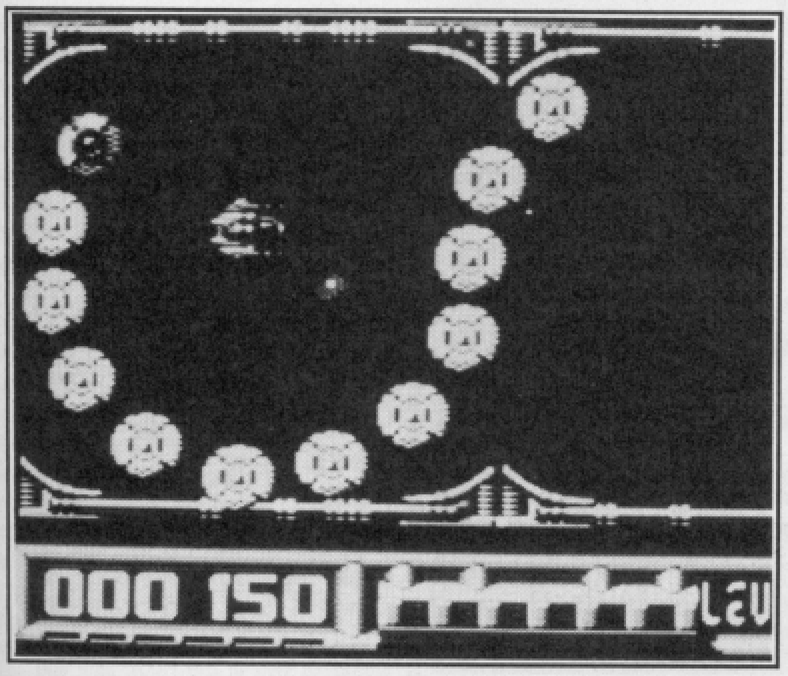
This is quite a departure for the Rack-It label, in that it's absolutely dire. Set inside some futuristic oil installation or other, the aim of the game is negotiate the maze-like series of pipes which have been inhabited by all manner of alien creatures.

One such alien scurries along the network, dropping glowing bombs along the way. It left unattended the bombs explode, destroying the current ship. The aim is therefore to travel along the pipes, collecting the bombs and attempting to destroy the bomb-dropping aliens before they can drop any more.

Bomber aliens are destroyed by several blasts from your laser, while the other marauding beings simply switch direction whenever shot. If any alien touches your ship you're destroyed, and if all the bombs aren't collected before the timer runs out, it's goodnight Vienna.

As with previous Rack-It releases, presentation is good, scrolling is smooth, the animation decent, and the soundtrack excellent. Unfortunately the gameplay is awful. It's fiddly, frustrating and decidedly dull. A great incentive to start saving, this ...**(2)**

CHEAPO OF THE MONTH



SLAYER
Rack It

Another original from Hewson's budget label though it has to be said it owes much to *Zynaps.* That's no mean recommendation either and honour is maintained in one of the slickest budget shoot 'em ups we've seen since, ooh, CU's very own giveaway next month *Exceleron.* A shameless plug we know.

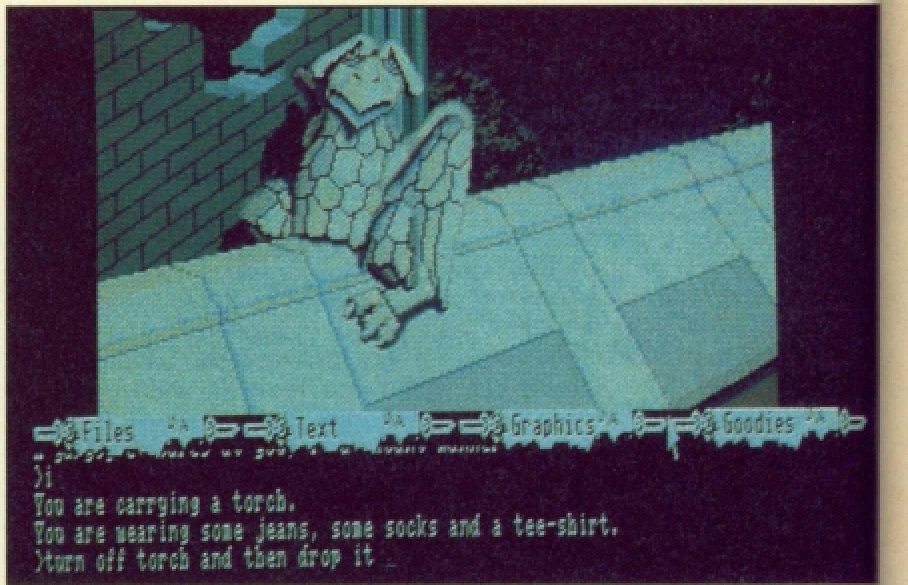
Getting back to *Slayer* it is a left to right scroller with gallons of flying nasties, snakes, some particularly large sprites and exquisite backdrops. Pick up extra weaponry including multiples which neatly revolve around the ship. There's some nice muthaships at the end of each level too, what can we say? Er wow, erm Cheapo of the Month, buy it, enjoy it!**(10)**

INTO THE VALLEY

by Keith Campbell

Rainbird/ Magnetic Scrolls Amiga: £24.95

FISH



Water is evaporating faster than it is being replenished, and the planet of Aquaria is in danger of drying out. A top priority project is underway at the Opah University in the city of Hydropolis, where, under the direction of the eminent Dr. Roach, a device is being built. The device is designed to teleport vast volumes of water to Aquarius, to reverse the flow, and thus save the Aquarians from a catastrophic drought.

Unfortunately, an interdimensional anarchist group, The Seven Deadly Fins, have other ideas. They are plotting the demise of Hydropolis, and hope to achieve this by sabotaging the project. The University authorities, convinced that the project team has been infiltrated, call upon Roach to investigate and fillet out the intruder.

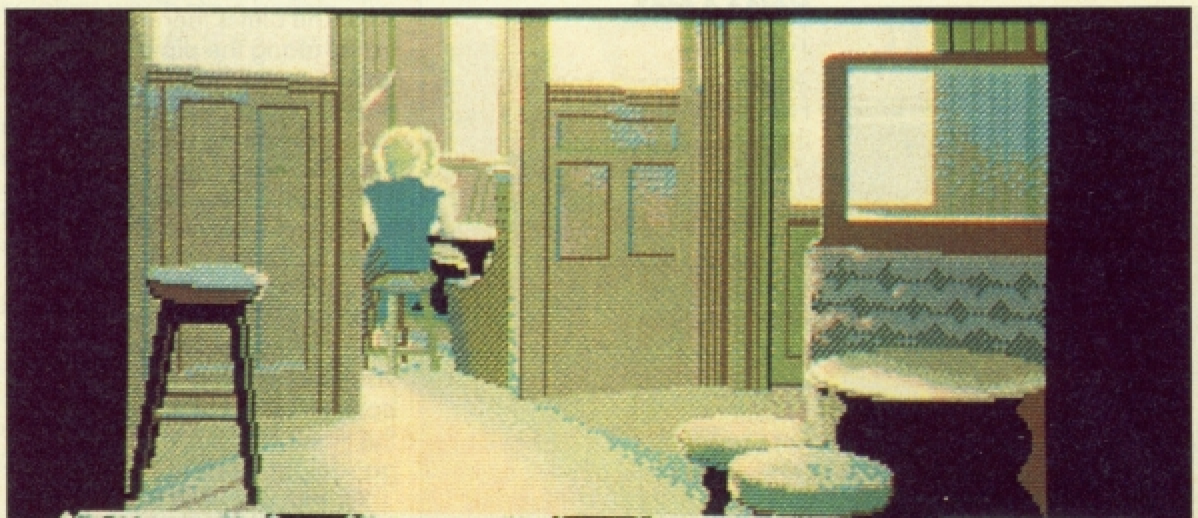
And so it came about, that as I swam innocently into the plastic castle that had dropped as if from nowhere into my bowl and settled gently on the gravel at the bottom, I was mistakenly assumed to be an applicant for the job of special investigator, and transported into the body of Roach, with the task of saving Aquaria.

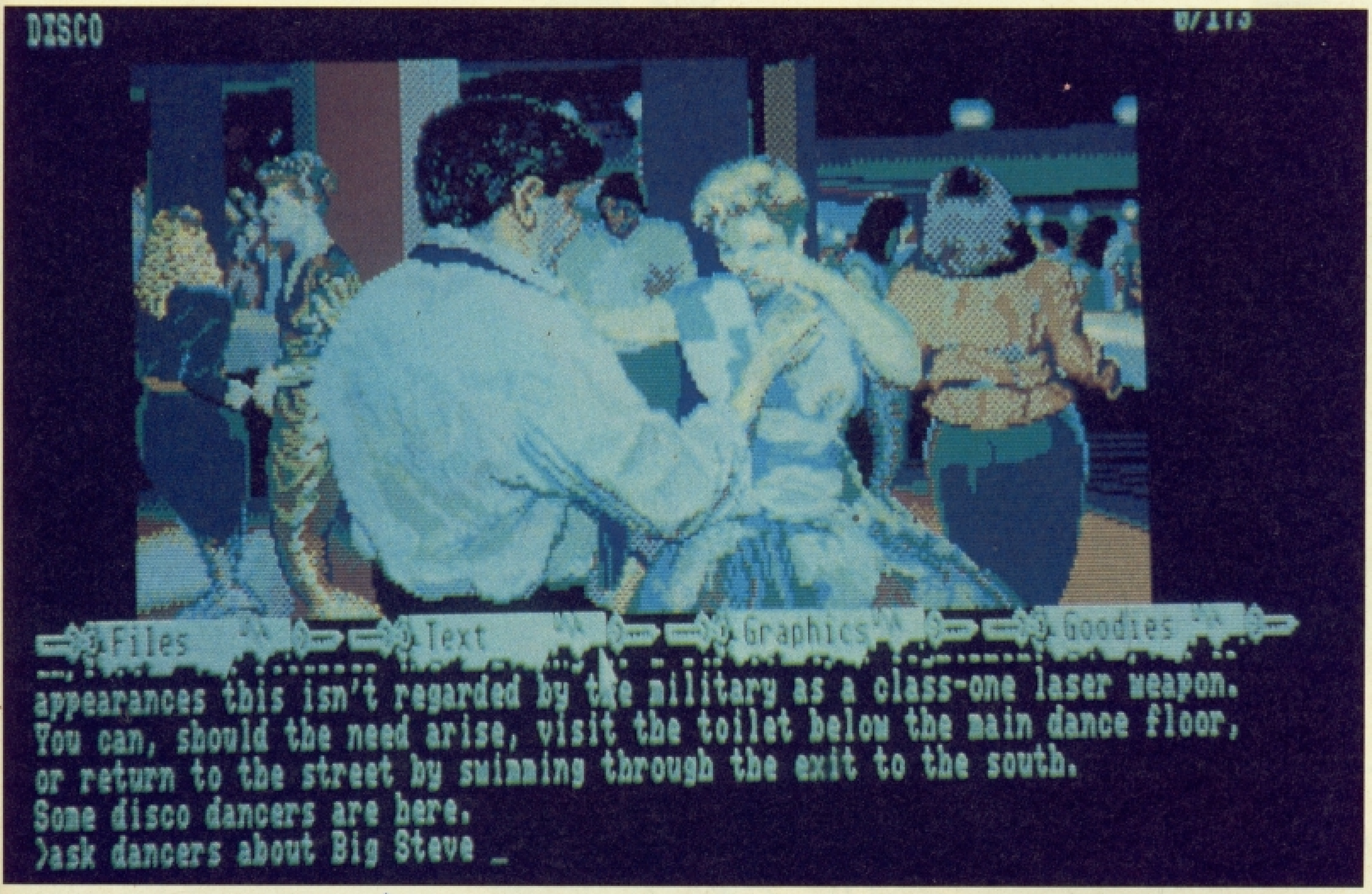
I found myself in Roach's luxury water-conditioned apartment, and collecting my Fishofax from the mantlepiece, I set off to nearby Paddington underground station, to keep an important appointment at Opah.

After looking around a bit, things didn't look too bright. In the project room itself, a wallplan showed that of seven components required for the Device, only one was in stock — a wallplan. The missing parts included such items as a filter, a case, and a shelf, and I soon got the idea that suitable equivalents might be found in unlikely places. I found a few, too, but actually getting hold of them, however, was not so easy!

Steve, for example, who runs a second hand shop near Eelpout, was most insistent that the old case on display had already been sold. It was enough to make me decide to take the tube to Pickerel, and have a snifter or two in the Hook Line and

Bar room blues.





Things start swinging.

Sinker. It was a terrible journey — the train was full of guppies.

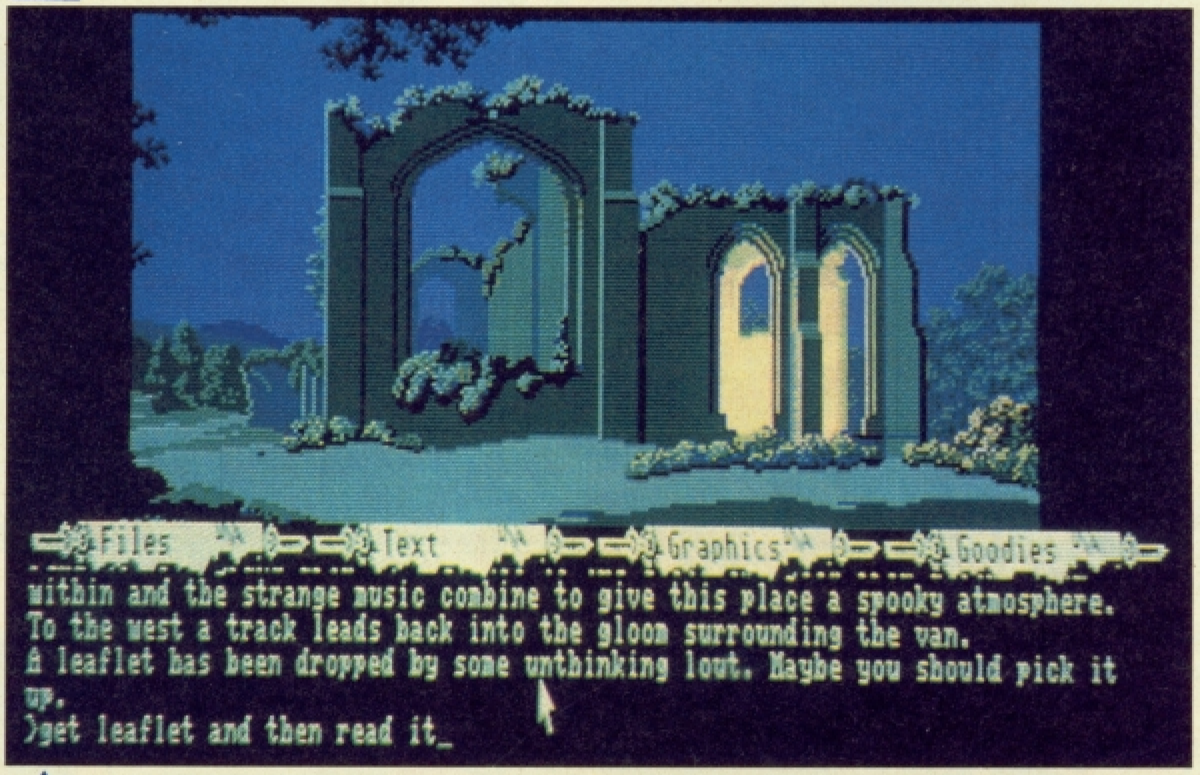
Fish, is the latest game from Magnetic Scrolls, and their third this year. Full of fishy puns, you may by now have gathered that you play the part of a goldfish in a watery environment. So having a drink in the local is a whole new experience, involving placing a mask over ones face to inhale the intoxicating gases.

The construction of *Fish* is unusual. Before getting into the main part of the game, it is necessary to complete three mini-adventures. The fish-people of Aquaria, as well as having all the usual fishy appendages, are endowed with arms and hands. As a mere goldfish, you are a plain fish, so the mini-adventures cast you in the role of a human to get you used to manipulating things when you eventually take the form of Dr. Roach. Solve all three mini-adventures, and you are judged trained and capable of tackling the job for which the fish-god Dagon mistakenly thinks you have applied.

The mini-adventures are really quite small, but nevertheless, they take a while to work through. You must retrieve a key from each scenario — a recording studio, a ruined abbey, and a forest of Kerovnian nature. These can be entered in any order, and whilst pondering on a sticky problem in one, you can pop out of it and into one of the others.

The recording studio is where you first meet up with the ubiquitous Steve, but success in getting away with a key is elusive unless you can satisfy his insatiable thirst for coffee. The forest has Pythonesque overtones. You won't find a pouch in its hollow stump — what you will find is a complete loony living inside it. Convinced he is famous for his philosophy that every man should find a bird, his own best friend is an exploding homing-pigeon with absolutely no sense of direction!

With graphics that have made Magnetic Scrolls adventures unique in their field, *Fish* is a completely off-beat affair. It will have you gurgling with mirth, until the air-bubbles trickle up your cheeks.



Be efishient pick up the leaflet.

GRAPHICS	10
PLAYABILITY	9
PUZZLEABILITY	9
OVERALL	10

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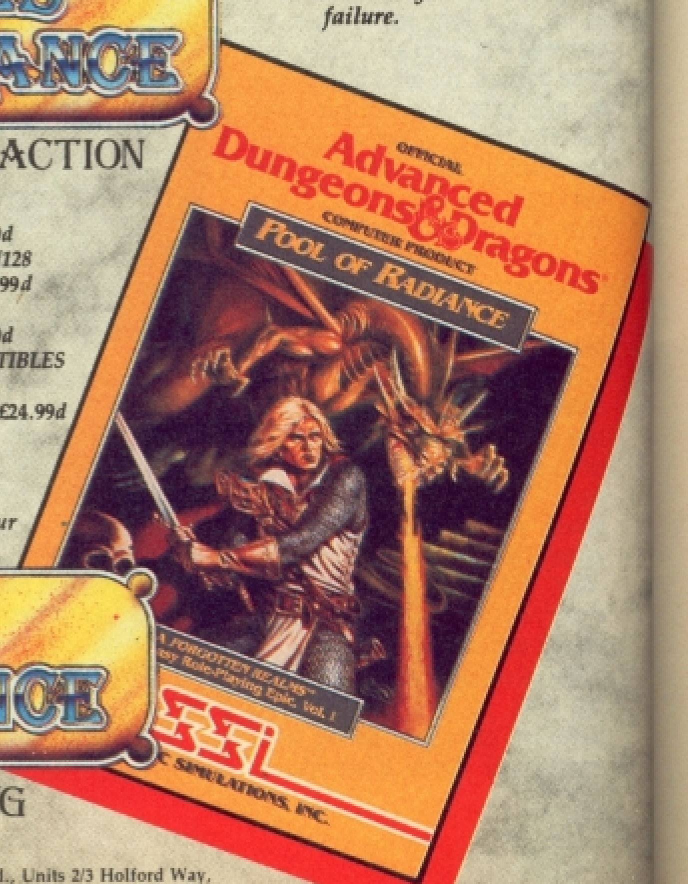


In the mystical world of Krynn an epic battle rages between the forces of good and evil. Eight brave companions enter the treacherous ruins of the temple of Xak Tsaroth seeking the precious Disks of Mishakal – the only end to this infernal struggle. Draconian monsters, skeletal undead, powerful magic and countless other terrors face the adventurers but the way is barred by the ancient black dragon, Khisanth. Find the key to destroy Khisanth or you are doomed to failure.

HEROES OF THE LANCE

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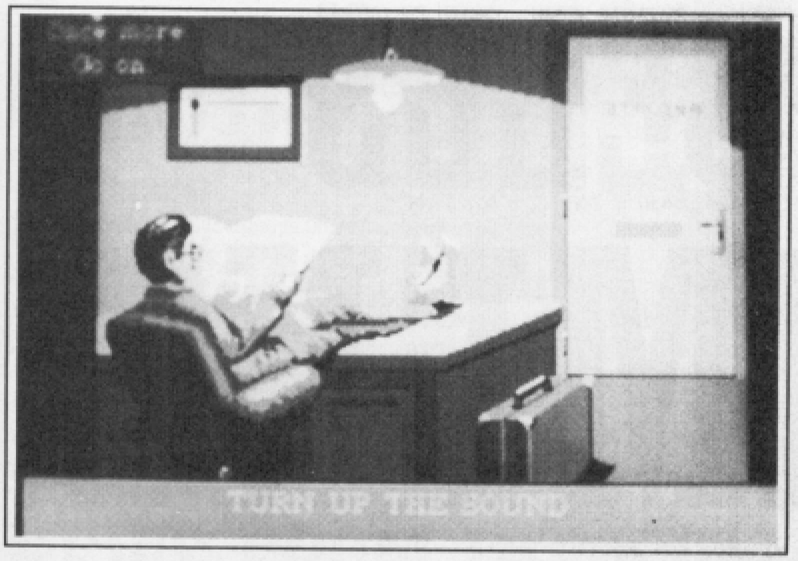
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INTO THE VALLEY

by Keith Campbell



MORTVILLE MANOR

Lankhor Amiga: £24.95

GRAPHICS	8
PLAYABILITY	8
PUZZLEABILITY	8
OVERALL	8

A desperate telegram pleading for help, has you rushing to Mortville Manor, to seek out Julia Defranck. Very ill, she expresses fears for the safety of her family.

And so you find yourself in the mountains, the snow covered manor in front of you gleaming in the morning sun. As you approach, a wolf howls, sending a shiver down your spine, and the bell on the chapel tolls, almost as if in warning.

Entering the great building, you are greeted with the news that Julia has died, and her family has gathered at the manor to sort out her affairs. The detective in you tells you that all is not as it seems, and so you set about investigating what you are convinced is a case of murder.

Mortville Manor is of French origin, and has to be the first adventure that uses digitised sound as an integral part of the game, rather than as an added extra.

All actions are performed using function keys and mouse — there is no text input at all. For example, to move, the MOVE option on the menu bar is touched with the mouse, and a drop-down menu lists the available locations. Select it, and you are on your way. Sometimes you are also offered the option of 'choice on screen', and can then point to a place in the picture to which you want to move.

To carry out other actions, ACT on the menu bar displays a long list of selectable verbs. Objects are taken by first discovering where they lay (you may have to open, say a drawer) and then searching it, using the ACT menu. If there is anything of interest inside, these will be graphically displayed in sequence, allowing each to be taken, or otherwise manipulated.



Come in and look at my etchings...



Out in the cold.

The crux of the game is interaction with the family of the deceased during your investigation. They all move about the manor and grounds, and sometimes gather in small groups at different times of the day. When you find yourself in the company of someone you wish to question, the DIScuss option on the menu bar produces a list of the characters, with the available ones shown in highlight.

Selecting one of these causes an animated portrait of the person in question to be displayed, followed by a list of questions or subjects for discussion, such as Julia's death, Eva's relationship with Max, and so on. Further subjects are added to the list as you make more discoveries whilst progressing through the game.

Once a subject has been chosen, an animated portrait of the suspect replies in sound only — no text captions are provided. The result is often comic, for the speech has a very distinct French accent superimposed on a robotic intonation. In posing your questions, it pays to be discreet, for asking too many questions tends to produce hostility, and results in the rather monotonous answer "You are too curious."

The mystery is solved by the process of deduction — from the different answers you get to the same questions, together with other clues your sharp sense of observation provides you with, as you move from room to room. Why, for example, does Bob seem to think Julia died from frostbite, when everyone else tells you she died from pulmonary embolism?

Altogether a 'different' game, with plenty of atmosphere, and whilst I'm not sure that I would like to play with that format frequently, it does make a refreshing change.

INTO THE VALLEY

CAMPBELL'S COMMENT

by Keith Campbell

Here's a dissatisfied customer! I wonder if he understands the subtleties of English humour and slang...?

*I want to complain about your review of *Jinxter*. I bought the game for my 64 (before I read your review) and was immediately dissatisfied with it. The graphics are terrible, and yet you gave them a 10, and it loads for almost 30 seconds between responses!

You also said that in places problems were more like vocabulary problems, and that because of that it got a lower playability rating. You gave it a 10! Personally, I think it deserved a 2! Also, you said the review was for the 64, whereas the graphics pictured were obviously Amiga screenshots.

Don't get me wrong, I thought your reviews of *Stationfall* and *Lurking Horror* were great. I just don't want another hapless 64 owner to waste their money on *Jinxter*.
Asif Hassan,
Adnoc,
Abu Dhabi.

Campbell's Comment: Two things went wrong with the Jinxter review. The Amiga version and price were omitted from the title, and should have come before the C-64. And the Puzzleability and Playability ratings got transposed.

As for the graphics, once you've seen a picture, it doesn't appear again unless you want it to, thus speeding up the response. And I challenge you to name a C-64 adventure with better graphics! And I still think it's a great adventure, so there!

And now, what's life like in Poland, for a 64 owner?

*I enclose a copy of Bajtek magazine, because this issue is an event for all Commodore users in Poland. It is the first magazine dedicated to Commodore only. I would like to make a small review of this issue.

First there is very good news on page 3. An interview with Paul Moloney says that Commodore is going to sell thousands of 64, 128, and Amiga machines in Eastern Europe. Russia is even going to use the C-64 as an educational computer at school. I hope that not only computers will be more easily available — also software, too.

This interview is in fact the most interesting part of the mag. A lot of information is very old and useless. Games reviewed (*Flight Simulator II*, *The Last Ninja*) are well known to all Commodore users in Poland.

On page 27 is a review of other Commodore magazines, including the title page of Commodore User. But what an old photo it is!! The small review of your magazine says that it costs 95p! When was it? A small announcement says that inside one can find a review of *Lord Of The Rings*....

As you see, some information is really old, but it is good that editors have finally noticed this computer existing in our country.
Krzysztof Struszczak,
Lodz, Poland.

Campbell's Comment: The CU pictured in Bajtek was the March 1986 issue, when a certain Mr John Ransley was writing Into The Valley! I took over from him in May that year. Greetings from us at CU to all your Commodore using friends in Poland!

VALLEY RESCUE

The *Shard of Inovar* deserves a cult following. So believes Marrie Rosenbrand of Noord-Brabant in The Netherlands. You may remember that Beverley Knight was stuck twixt east and west back in July. In this month's clues section, Marrie helps to move her north, with a sudden burst of inspiration. However, Marrie then ran out of steam east of the hill, and couldn't pass the 'naslava'.

"I like *Shard of Inovar* very much because of its atmosphere, but the programmers shouldn't have used such an appalling font for the text. It's a strain on the eye. But then again for a budget game..." comments Marrie. Continuing that *Shard* deserves a cult following, Marrie suggests that if Beverley, or any other player would like to correspond about it, "...that would be great." So if you fancy some company in playing *Shard*, write to M. J. Rosenbrand, Hogezandschel 11, 5161 RL Sprang-Capelle, Noord-Brabant, Nederland.

Steven Lyon of Liverpool has attained an IQ of 2 by drinking water, and by thinking, but he isn't clever enough yet to read a book. He is stuck in the first room of Part 3 of *Frankenstein*, which he is not able to leave because he needs to understand a little more. He's sure the answer is obvious, but of course, it's always the obvious that is the most difficult to see!

What should Olav Bjoernbakken say to the stone man to wake him up, in *Bard's Tale II*? And where is the entrance to the crypt?

Help with *Maniac Mansion* for Patrick Beenan, has come from far off places! Melinda Brand wrote from Australia, whilst Asif Hassan sent some tips from Abu Dhabi. "For starters there's no gas for the chainsaw so it's useless," writes Asif Hassan. "The combination to the safe is written underneath it on the wall, but it's too small to read. Try using the telescope. The combination to the inner door is always the high score on the *Meteor Mess* game, provided that Dr Fred has played first."

Whenever Carlos Montero enters the well, a Philbert eats him alive! Whenever he rings a bell by the high gates, Franklin Snarl has him killed by a monster! Carlos, from Maasmechelen in Belgium, is playing *Tass Times* — who can help him?

Aidan McLoughlin is on a ledge, watching the moon rising above the cliff, wondering what on earth to do next. Any experienced Wolfmen about?

"How can I get into Dracula's room without him killing me?" asks Yngve Nordgaard, of Sortland in Norway. And there's that room in *Jack The Ripper*, that's bugging him, too! You know, the room with the paintings.

Finally, Alen Williams, having got over his grizzles about sexism in computer magazines, has got real problems! He just lit a fire and went to sleep, and guess who woke him up? "Old big stuff himself, Frankenstein!" complained Alen, "And I do not know how to get past him!" Worse still, Alen *still* can't get past the man with the gun, in *Eureka*!!! "So, Mr Superduperwellhunkyperson, if you know, would you please be a little flower and let old Uncle Al know?" If you mean me, Al, 'fraid I don't! Any knowing petals around?

If you can't help others with their problems, perhaps you need some help yourself, with your adventure! Write to me at The Valley, Commodore User, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU, and I will do my best to sort an answer out for you!

INTO THE VALLEY

by Keith Campbell

CLUES

FRANKENSTEIN:
Pick up first fruit and smell it; pick up second fruit, smell it and eat it.

SHARD OF INOVAR:
West from the dais, examine the boulder and sign, use the vial, examine tree and hole, and get the hand. You won't be successful in this, but a new exit will appear.

MASTERS OF THE UNIVERSE:
Hit coat (of arms) to enter the castle.

DRACULA:
At the entrance to the labyrinth, go south twice to find a lamp. Return north, then east.

STATIONFALL:
To discover what to do about the final pyramid, the mayor's code should match your dotty taste!

JINXTER:
If the bell is too noisy, put a sock in it!

NEWS FROM INFOCOM

ZORK ONE

Always been envious of those lucky people with disc drives, who are able to play Infocom adventures? Your turn has come! By the time you read this, Zork 1 should be available on C-64 cassette, for £9.99. It remains to be seen whether this will be an abridged version, or have a cut-down parser — watch out for a review in the next issue!

ZORK ZERO

Watch out early next year *Zork Zero — The Revenge of Megaboz.* Featuring the newest generation Infocom parser, mouse interface and on-screen map, *Zork Zero* will bring you face to face for the very first time, with Lord Dimwit Flathead The Excessive himself!

Zork Zero will be available for the Amiga. Described as a prequel to *Zork 1*, and written by Steve (*Leather Goddesses*) Meretzky, *Zork Zero* will cover the first century of the Great Underground Empire.

JOURNEY — A ROLE PLAYING EPIC

A whole new realm of software from Infocom is promised, in a series of Role-Play Chronicles, told in the tradition of Tolkien's 'Lord of the Rings'.

Journey will be released for Amiga early in 1989, with a C-128 version to follow in the spring.

SHOGUN — WITH GRAPHICS

In collaboration with James Clavell, author of the best selling novel Shogun, Dave Lebling is busy putting the finishing touches to an interactive tale of intrigue of the same name.

Graphics in Japanese style will be used for text borders and story illustrations, as well as rewards for solving puzzles and handling situations successfully.

Shogun will be available for Amiga in the spring of 1989, and for the C-128 in early summer.



DRAGON BASHIN'

FANTASY ROLE-PLAYING GAMES

The words "Fantasy Role Playing" (FRP) are being bandied about the computer scene with increasing frequency, but few people know what they really mean or where they originate from. Who thought of them and what relevance do they have to computer games as we know them?
With these questions in mind, CU asked FRP aficionado Wayne to answer all the above (and more) in his own inimitable style . . .

Fantasy Role Playing (FRP) came into being around mid 1974, when a company called TSR issued a game called *Dungeons And Dungeons.* D+D, as it is affectionately known, was the brainchild of one E Gary Gygax, a disillusioned wargamer. Gygax found wargaming overly complex, immensely slow and very time consuming. He therefore decided to do something about it, so he invented D+D.

The concept was unique at the time. Instead of playing the commander of a huge army, you could pay the part of one single character, for whom you would ultimately feel more responsible. Furthermore, he created the concept of the Dungeon Master. This was a person who would run the game from a completely neutral viewpoint, and in essence play the part of a referee/god.

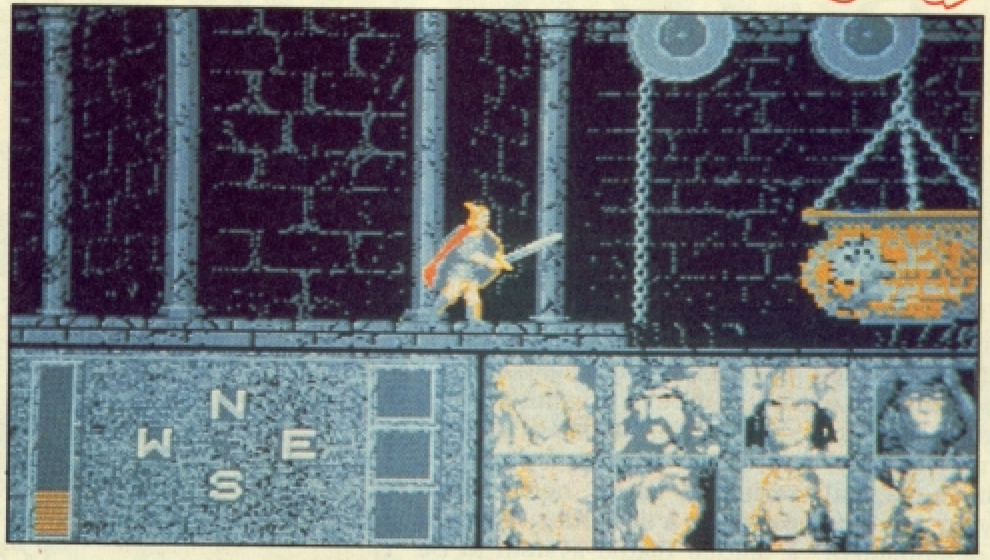
The idea behind the game was this; You would play the part of a character in a mythical fantasy land, where swords and sorcery prevailed. Your character would start off as one of four character classes; Thief, Fighter, Magic User or Cleric. Each character class had its own special abilities and it was your skill as a player to guide your character through a world where vicious monsters were an everyday threat, dragons were common place and dark dingy dungeons just begged to be explored. You would play the game alongside your friends, who would be equally as helpless and under the control of the Dungeon Master (DM).

The DM was a person who did not play the game. He or she simply ran it. It was up to a DM to read the rules, allocate the monsters and eventually shape the world which your characters would inhabit. A game of D+D was only as good as the DM who ran it and if the DM did not put the time and effort into the creation of the game, then a pretty poor time could be had by all. Being a DM is no easy task by the way, it takes a lot of forethought, quick thinking, bluff, understanding and general confidence to pull it off. However, it has its advantages. Whilst the players are fumbling about, trying to make their minds up what to do, you know exactly what is going to happen next and can see how much of a mess the party of adventurers has made of a given situation!! It's easy to see that a game of D+D can be extremely suspense filled, especially if the DM has a small streak of sadism.

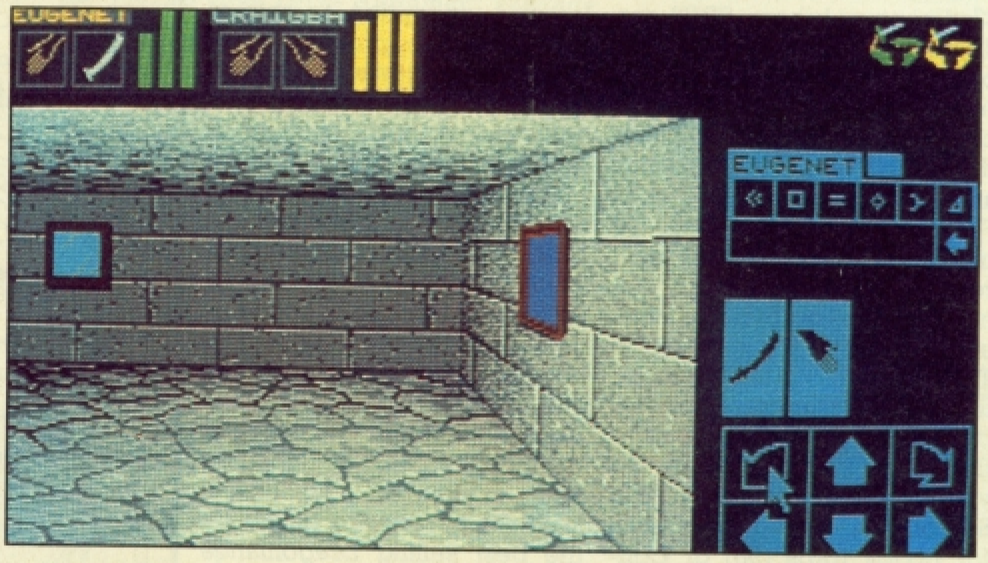
Furthermore there was a lot of dice rolling to be had, with all kinds of weird and wonderful die. The dice in fact ranged from the lowly four sided die to the ultra important 20 sided

die, which was used for combat results. It is hard to imagine the thrill and tension in rolling a 20 sided dice, but take it from me, I have seen adults bite their fingers down to knuckles on the solitary role of one die.

The reason for all this knuckle chewing is the life or death of your character. You see there is no winner or loser in D+D, as the game is not based around victory. The main aim was to keep your character alive, according to its beliefs. If your character survived at the end of an adventure, it was given Experience Points, which, if amassed to a certain amount could enable your character to progress in certain ways. First of all it would be harder to kill and equally as important, it would progress in its major skill. For example, a fighter would be able to land more blows in combat and a magic user could cast more intricate and deadly spells.



Mirrorsoft's Dungeon Master (Amiga).



SSI's Dragon Lance (Amiga).

So, with the advent of D+D, the concept of FRP was born. Since 1974, many FRP games have been marketed, with various degrees of success. For example, "Traveller" is a sci-fi FRP, which allows you to attempt playing the part of a mercenary soldier or a trader. You can travel all around the galaxy, meeting (and sometimes) killing aliens, taking on missions etc. "Warhammer" is a complete FRP system and also a game for mass Fantasy armies. Gygax resurfaced some years later with, AD+D, a more realistic, if more complex D+D. Over the years however, FRP games have been expanded to extreme levels to suit everybody's taste. Gone is the normal D+D concept. "Call Of Cthulhu", is an FRP based and inspired by the novels of H.P. Lovecraft, the renown horror writer, "Twighlight 2000" is a game based on earth after a third world nuclear war.

The tabletop FRP games expanded at a phenomenal rate and are still very popular indeed.

It wasn't long until Tabletop FRP was developed further. Now you can actually experience REAL Live Role Playing. Live Role Playing (LRP) is where you actually get dressed up in the relevant clothes, obtain the necessary weapons and actually go down deep, dark, dingy, dismal, claustrophobic, cold caves and fight monsters. Before you get worried, the swords are padded and made up of foam and gaffa tape, whilst the monsters are people dressed up in the appropriate costumes. Don't knock it until you try it. It really is the most exhilirating form of FRP there is.

Many problems can present themselves in the aforementioned FRP games however, and the two most common are time and availability. It is just not possible for people to meet all at the same time, week in week out, to play an FRP game, no matter how good it is. So enter the concept of Play By Mail (PBM) and Solo Role Playing Books.



PBM is nearly the same as over the table FRP except that your DM is based miles away from you, and your fellow roleplayers are scattered around the country, if not the world. In PBM you either write down a set of instructions, which you wish the DM to process, or you write down a series of numbers and figures, which are understood by a computer, who also plays the part of a DM. Through the use of dice or a computer program, your instructions are interpreted and a result is returned to you. You are charged a fee which can be anything from fifty pence to a fiver.

SRPB are another matter altogether. First of all you have to find the form of adventure book that you require and then

DRAGON BASHIN'

you read the introduction. Once the game system is understood, you then assume the part of the main character of the book and you set off on your quest. This may be anything from obtaining a magical gem to saving your parents from the clutches of a bunch of 23rd century bikers. SRPB are divided up into hundreds of paragraphs, which have different answers. You have to choose an option and once done you are moved onto another section of the book. For example Paragraph 10 may read: "You cross the barren desert and through the humid haze you find the rusting hulk of a long forgotten Third World War tank. It looks like it has been here for decades, as sand covers it up to the turret, which is open. Do you: Examine the turret (35), Search the surrounding area for booby traps (98) or Continue on your trek ignoring the tank completely (69)."

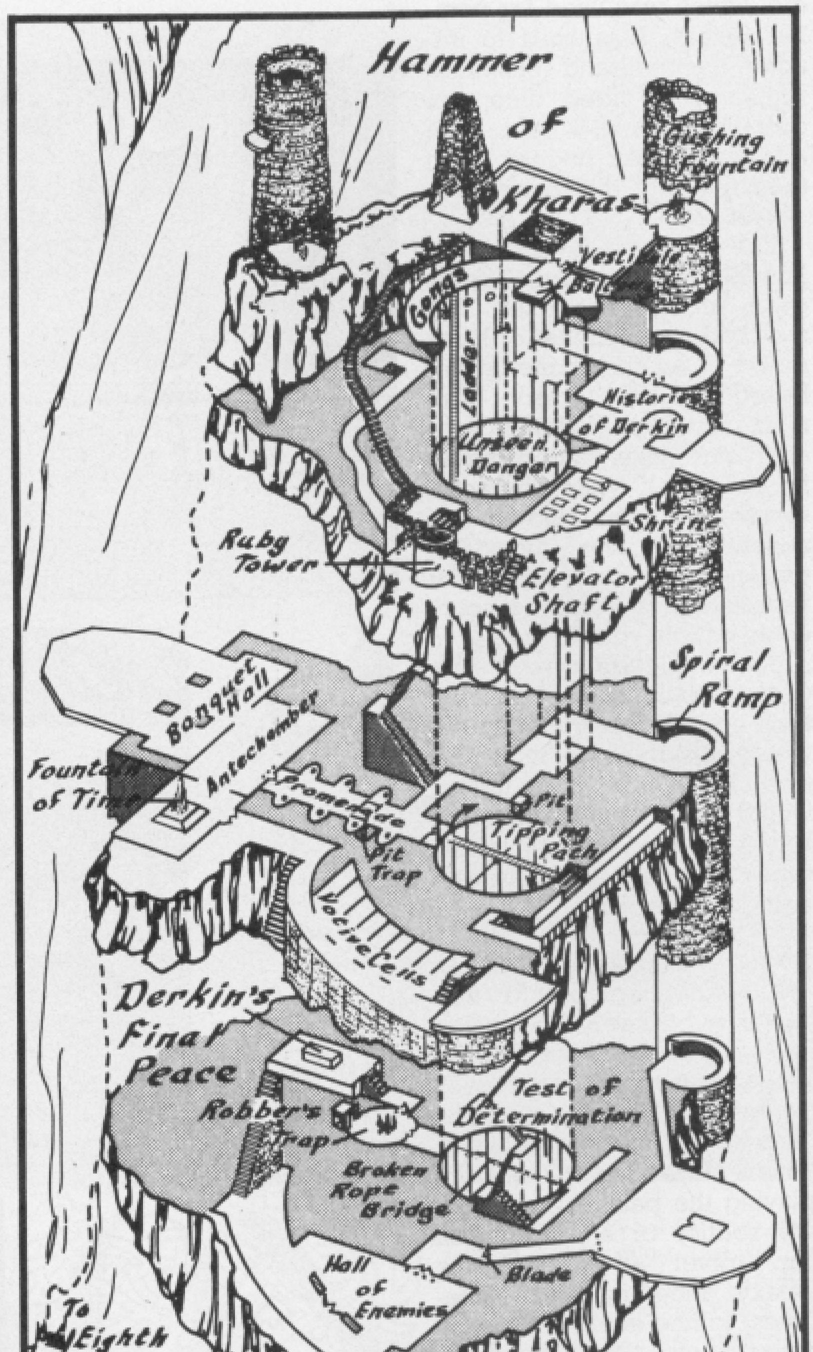
It would be for you to make up your mind and turn to the appropriate paragraph, which is numbered in brackets. This would present you with another description and a further set of paragraphs to move to. You would keep on like this until you died or completed the adventure.

FRP games were always down for computerization, but it was almost an impossibility until the 16 bit machines turned up. The nearest thing an FRP'er got to an FRP game on computer was an adventure, which was far from satisfactory. Of course over the years there have been the *Ultima* series, *The Bards Tale* compendium and games like *Wizardry* and *Phantasie*, which have contained roleplaying elements, but have not been true role playing games.

With the additional power and memory 16 bit machines contain, the programmers have finally got the chance they needed. One of the first decent role playing games looks set to be Mirrorsoft's *Dungeon Master*, (now you know where they got the game's name from). The game gives roleplayers the flexibility they had been dreaming of. No longer does a game depend on a one word answer or a series of tasks being completed in a set order. There is a unique magic system to be learned, an option to retreat and solve the problem from another angle, magic items to be examined, levels to be achieved and, most of all, freedom of choice!

However, hot on the heels of FTL comes the latest release from the combined forces of TSR/SSI/US Gold in the form of Advanced Dungeons and Dragons, which brings me nicely back to where I started. These classic tabletop games have been released in two formats, namely *The Pools Of Radiance* and *Heroes Of The Lance.* Both the games are based on the best selling *Dragonlance Chronicles* which started life as a set of adventures for over the table role players. They were then converted into a series of best selling books, and have now turned up as a computer game. *Heroes,* is a cross between an arcade and a platform game, whilst *Pools* is a role player's dream. The latter game sticks firmly to the AD+D tabletop rules, but has the added advantage of being playable by one person. *Pools of Radiance* is reviewed on page 34.

It is fast becoming clear that during the latter part of the year and in the immediate future, FRP computer games will be *the* thing. Original Tabletop FRP games will be computrised for solo play, to appease individual needs. At the moment *Battletech,* the futuristic best seller game based upon 100 ton robot warriors shooting it out with horrendous amounts of hi-tech weaponry, is in the process of being computerized by Melbourne House/Mastertronic and other famous FRP games are already in the pipeline. I predict in the none to distant future, we will see such FRP games such as *Runequest* and



A typical map from the Dragon Lance atlas.

Call of Cthulhu computerized, with many other games following. Remember when you see them, that you read about them first in CU!

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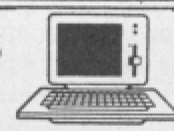
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Letters

Hacker Backlash

● Reading the letter entitled 'A day in the life' I was transfixed to say the least. I could not believe this guy. How can this 'person' afford to speak to a contact in America for an hour, ring up all these bulletin boards and still have money to go abroad to all these hackers conferences from dole money? This person sounds as though he could rewrite *Uridium+* in an afternoon. Who does this inflated ego think he is? And anyone who watches 'Neighbours' is asking for trouble. Mr Turbo Cracker, why not send your demos to CU so we can all see them? Enough on hackers; they aren't worth wasting breath on.

CU certainly has improved since November 86 when I first bought it. The budget section I find is invaluable as if I have any spare cash I buy a budget game. The letters section I read first to see your witty responses to argumentative (Oooh! Big Word!) letters. Tommy's Tips is next to see if any of his help is useful to me. Then to the games reviews. Oh what a feast of graphic delights befall me as I flick through page after page of intelligently and amusingly written reviews. I welcome the return of the page of gossip at the back. One item I would like to see is a cover designed on the Amiga. On the price drop on this marvellous computer you might say Amiga (a meagre) sum for a Mega Machine.

Just a last point: Why is the muscular fellow on the *Target Renegade* ads kicking himself in the wotsits?
Robin Elvin
Attleborough

Yep, we're all getting a bit bored with pompous pirates too. And on the subject of the *Target Renegade* rock-crusher, well perhaps he just shelled out £1.50 for a certain rival mag's October issue . . .

Cracking Up

● I guess you are shaking your head while reading the top of this letter, moaning: "Damn it. Yet another stupid pirate going on my nerves!"

But before you start to throw this letter into your already overfilled dustbin . . .
Jeff Smart/TRIAD
West Germany

Too late.

Mastertronic Mix-Up

● Could you please, please, please, please help me. I recently brought a copy of Mastertronic's 'Make Music with Mastertronic' and somehow the game is not on there, but on the tape instead of the game, when you load it up you get a game called 'Jungle Story' and 'Bionic Granny'. These games have very simple graphics and I don't know what they are doing on the tape. I did not keep the receipt for the game but when I explained to the shop they said the mistake was impossible and that I must have programmed it.

To tell you the truth I have had my C64 for two years now and I can't even get a sprite on the screen let alone program a game. Please could you help me by giving me Mastertronic's address so that I could write to them, as I think that this tape might have been a programmer's play game.

Please help me as I am stuck with a tape that hasn't got the game on it that it should have but a couple of imposter basic ones.
Daniel Edward Hill,
Stowmarket

A strange tale indeed, Daniel. Mastertronic are contactable at 2-4 Vernon Yard, Portobello Road, London W11 2DX.

Unamoosing

● Another amazing discovery by the Unmoose has led to official scientific recognition of a new species of "human" being, formally called the "Moose". It is thought to have been around almost as long as, and directly due to the software industry. The moose is well known as an incredibly stupid animal (sorry if I offend any of your staff (he lied)). It is therefore a great name for someone who wastes a lot of money on the same game, a lot of times, and then says they didn't buy *Sentinel* for lack of funds!

I readily admit that some games are well disguised behind nice graphics and a hydraulic pump; but if you think about it you will find that the first level of *Typhoon* (and therefore *Afterburner*) is *Galaxians* in drag!!!!! Do I hear the collective super Novae of every mind in software journalism!! (All 6 of them including the three spread between Gary Whitta's multiple (and egotistical) personalities).

Have I uncovered the secret of life, the universe, artificial inteligence, and why *Red Storm Rising* has only been converted as a nuclear submarine sim??? Or is that strange, eerie cry I hear coming from the primeval swamp of my bedroom just some software tycoon shouting "oh no, I've been unmoosed!"

I hope all those moose (plural) who are bothering to read this mag (instead of the instructions to another *Space Invaders* clone that claims to be "a high-speed state of the art simulation of picking you're nose whilst saving the earth from hoardes of cuddly martian brontosauri who have bad breath!" will take note and think (in their own limited capacity) before spending £10 on *Revenge of the Psychotic Man-Licking Ninja Pixies from 32A, Brookside Close, Fairyland, Nr Birmingham III* which happens to be *Pac Man* by psychedelic occult programmers who avoided copyright charges by making *Pac Man* square, adding mammary organs, stilletto heels and an odd-shaped love truncheon and pretending it's an alien! I further hope that the moose is added to the ranks of Yuppy, Yummie and Urban Spaceman. Then cruelly exterminated with the aid of a bottom widener and a battering ram by a ruthless mob of original programmers and manourian moose hunters.
Simon "Unmoose" Watson,
Chingford

Do we really deserve to be sent these mooseterious missives? Antlers on a postcard . . .

Red Card

● You probably won't remember me, but this time last year you printed my letter about foota games and Sunderland AFC. In your reply you stated that I should be listening to Simple Mind's "Promised You A Miracle" if I thought Sunderland would go up and West Ham down in one season.

Well I was close wasn't I?

West Ham only avoided the relegation play-offs (which they surely would have lost) on goal difference and Sunderland dominated the 3rd Division all season, with attendances almost twice those of Upton Park.

I hope Sunderland and West Ham are drawn together in one of the cups next season so we can finally show you southern softies how to play football the north east way (Newcastle can't play foota in any sort of way so don't use them as an example).

Now back to computers. A year later there are still no real rivals to *International Soccer.*
Simon Harris,
Durham

Your fans only turn up when you're winning. The truth of the matter is no-one's even heard of any of your players. And for our money *Microsoccer* gives *International Soccer* a serious kicking. Naff off, Buggerallmoney.

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As you may well have read last month three of this country's leading 16 bit software houses are joining forces to release games. Triad is the label by which Psygnosis, Mirrorsoft and Rainbird will first release an Amiga compilation and subsequently original games.

They're so chuffed at the whole prospect that they've offered us a brilliant prize to celebrate the label's inception. Not only can you win an A500, but they're offering a monitor to go with it and nine games worth nearly two hundred pounds on their own! By our collective fingers and toes we make that about a grand's worth.

So how can you get your mitts on all this gear?

Well, it's question time again and we here at CU have got our posers hats on (except Nick Kelly he's got his poseur's hat on) and come up with some toughies, and since we're all food freaks here, they're based on Chinese food. Here's your starter:

1) Which one of these is not a soup?
a) Wan Tun b) Wan Kilo c) Fish Head

Now we're onto the main course

2) What is Dim Sum?

3) What kind of pan is Chinese food cooked in?

And finally a sweet?

4)What is a lychee?

First correct entry out of Nick Kelly's poseur's hat gets the mega prize. Send your answers on a postcard to Triad Compo, Commodore User, 30-32 Farringdon Lane, London EC1R 3AU. Entries to arrive no later than October 14.



VINDICATOR

LEVEL 1

	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m	n	o	p	q	r
0		S	S						S		B							
1					S		S						S		S	S	S	
2		L↑3	S				S		S	S							B	
3					S						S		S		C		S	
4			S						S				S					
5	S		C			S									L↓3		S	
6							S		S		L↓4		S					×
7		S	S		S										S		S	
8					S		S		S		S		S					
9			S		S		S								S		S	
10			L↑4				S	B	S		S		S	S	S			
11																	C	

LEVEL 2

	a	b	c	d	e	f	g	h	i	j	k	l	m	n	o	p	q	r
0																		
1	L↓4		S	B	S					S	S				S	S		S
2			S															
3							S		S		S				S		B	
4				S		S					C							
5		S		S					S								S	
6						S		B	S									
7			C								S		S		S		L↑3	
8							S		S				S					
9		S		S													L↑4	
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11																		

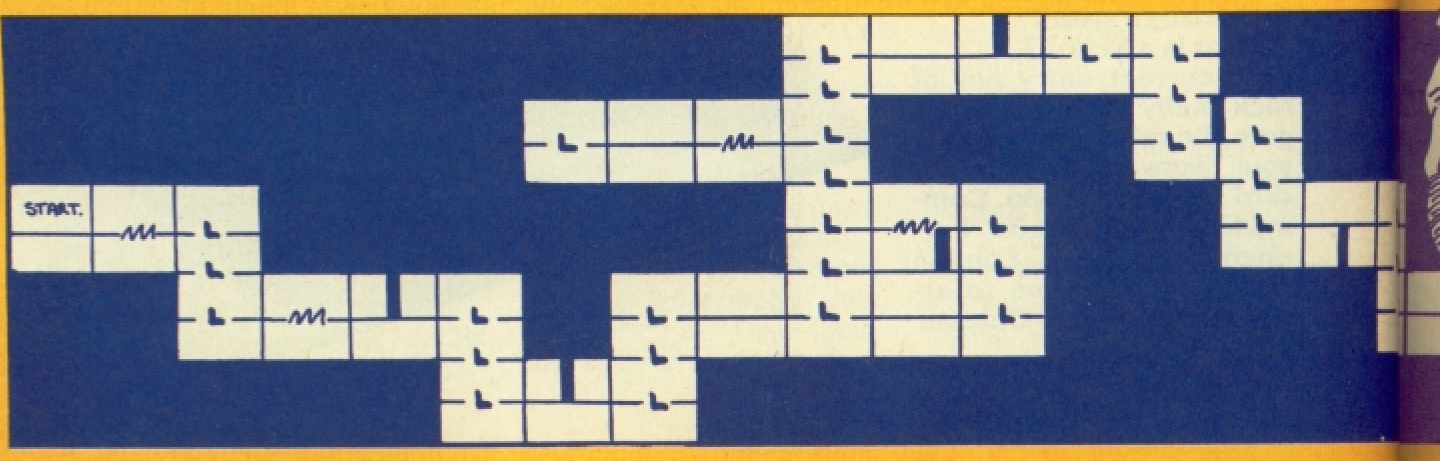
LEVEL 3

KEY

L = LIFT

(trapdoor symbol) = TRAPDOOR

I = WALL



LEVEL 3



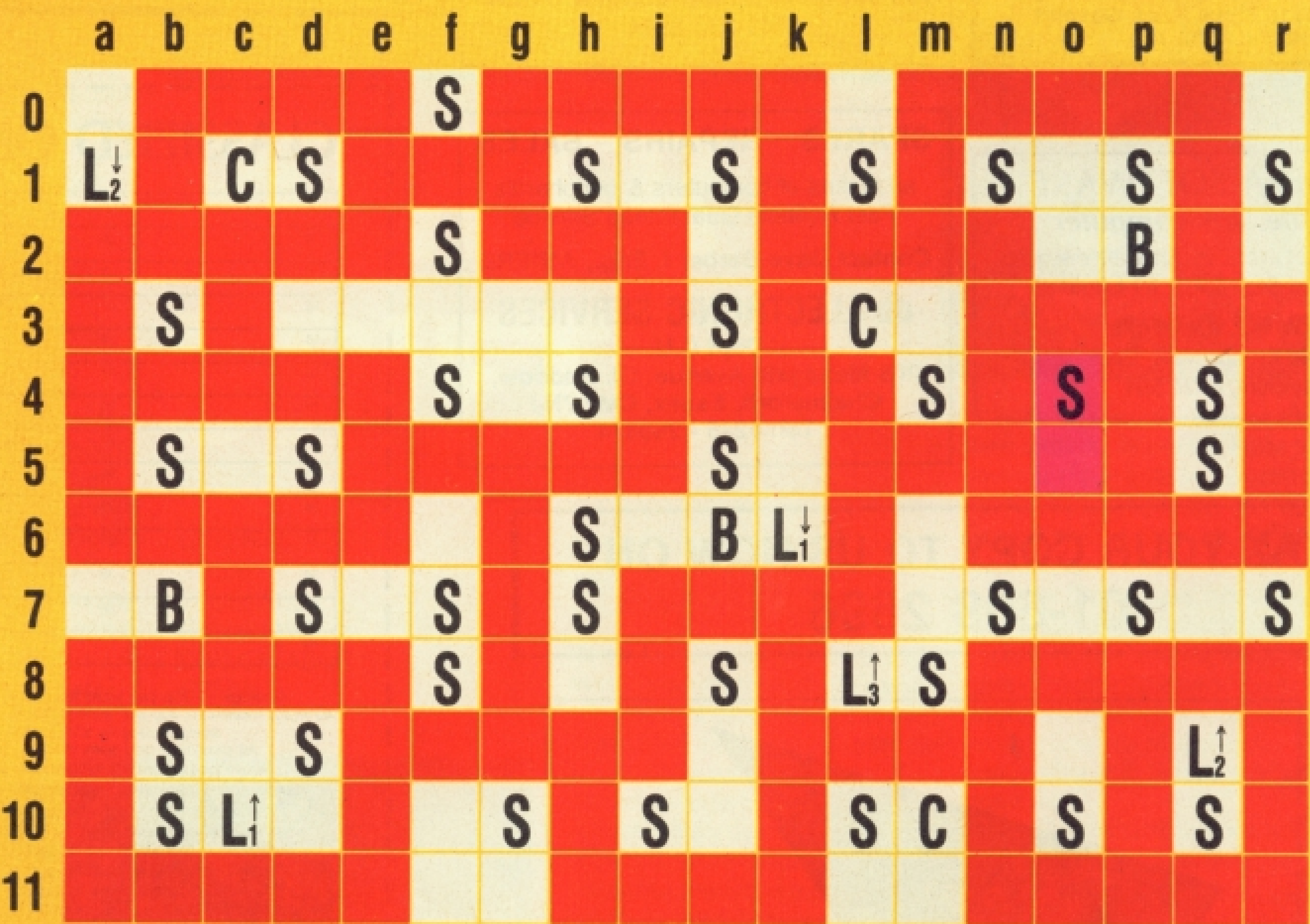
We couldn't help noticing how tough The Vindicator was when we played it last month. One estimate reckoned it would take three hours just to get through the first level, even if you knew where you were going. Right we thought, feeling helpful, we'll tell them where to go. We're always telling people where to go mind you . . .

Level One is composed of four separate levels represented as a huge complex of rooms which contain the computers with the locations of the hidden bomb components.

The thing you need to remember here is simply to note the location of rooms with oxy-gum. Don't pick it up every time you see it, because you'll waste it.

The answers to the puzzles are all proper names of people who work at Ocean. For instance Martin Lunjai becomes Julian Ritman. Here's a few other names to bear in mind: Dave Collier, Steve Wahid, John Meegan, Simon Butler, Jonathan Dunn.

LEVEL 4





KEY

X — Start
S — Storeroom (may contain oxygum) WILL contain aliens carrying pass cards, lift cards, ammo.
B — Bomb components — invisible until activated by correct computer.
C — Computer room.
L — Lift — Number shows TO or FROM which floor.

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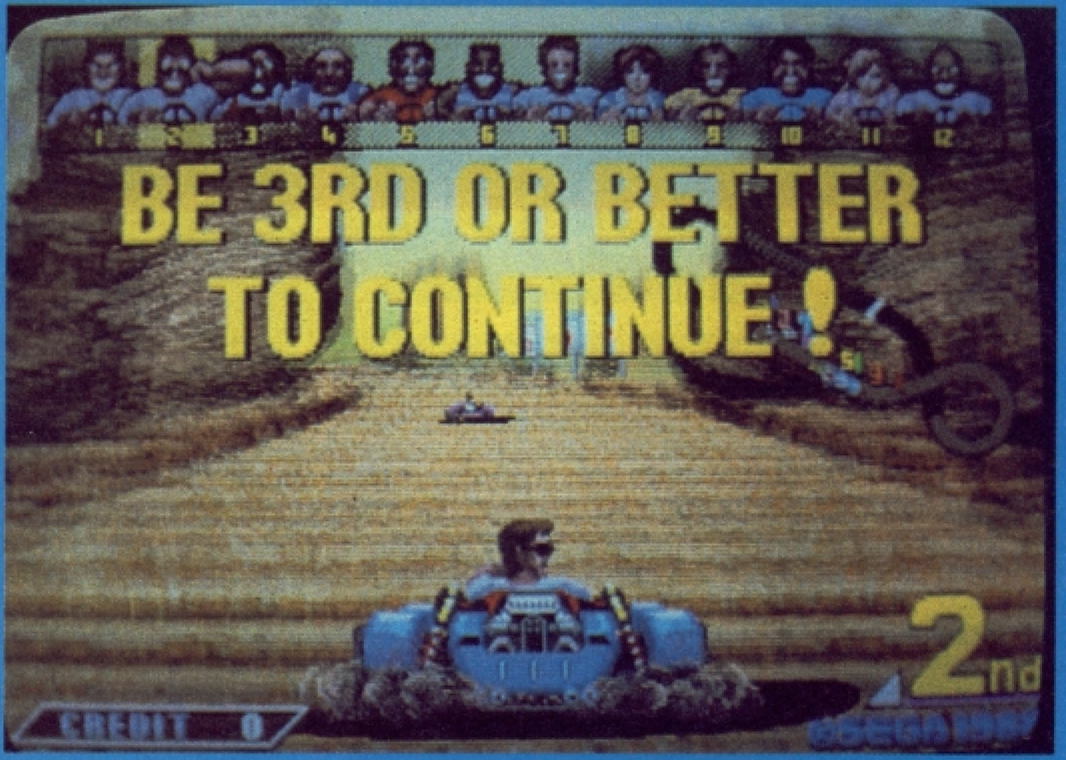
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POWER DRIFT

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Game testers at Sega sure must have strong stomachs. *Power Drift* is yet another climb-into console which tosses you around like a branch in a flash-flood. This time the theme is car racing rather than air *(Afterburner, Thunderblade)* or space *(Galaxy Force)* flight, and the tone is a wee bit more lighthearted than that of its older brothers and sisters.

Once you've got your bank loan (this baby costs a quid a play, matey), climbed in and seatbelted yourself, you get to choose from five different courses and — a novel one, this — twelve individual racing drivers. The twelve potential in-car yous range from a demure blonde to a cheery yuppie accountant type to an obviously psychotic punk pedal pusher.

The different courses take you over bridges and under 'em, careering through towns, countryside and desert. Each level is composed of several laps of quite a short course, the idea presumably being that you get to know the roads and won't make the same mistakes twice.

You compete against the other eleven drivers, and you've got to get into the top three places in each race to qualify for the next one — fall outside this standard and it's another precious quidlet or vacate that seat.

The movements of the large console are suitably dynamic — the seat belt isn't just a cosmetic touch. As the road twists, turns and rises before you, you're jerked about with considerable force. And with slightly larger-than-life graphics which manage to be as fast-moving as any racing game I've seen to date, and a raucous sound track grunging out, the sensation of rapid movement is well simulated. As is becoming standard, you get night/day changes as you progress through the game.

GRAPHICS:	7
SOUND:	8
TOUGHNESS:	8
ENDURANCE:	5
CONVERTABILITY:	3
OVERALL:	6



Meet Jason.

There are a couple of neat comic touches too. Each time you pass one of your opponents, your in-car characters turns his or her head and yells crowingly over their shoulder at the overtaken driver. The more restrained characters merely sneer, but the heavier characters such as Jason the punk mountain throw caution to the wind, turning round, making riotously rude hand, finger and arm signs and yelling back 'Sit on this, slo-mo!"

Not that you can usually afford such gestures; control of your car, over the elevations and taking bends in particular, is really tough, and over a course as short as these ones, just one slip will cause the controls to start bellowing "hurry up!" at you as your placing drops back while you recover.



Fifth place and challenging.

Power Drift actually falls between two stools; until you master the technique, you're liable to waste pots of money; and once you do eventually manage to work out exactly how you should be proceeding, it all becomes rather repetitive.

I can't really fault Sega on this driving game: it's well put together, looks good, plays nicely and sounds great. It's just that it's not really tremendously innovative or varied. Even if it was twenty or thirty pee per play, I figure the thrills and spills would soon wear off fairly shortly. At a quid a shot, I just can't see *Power Drift* making as big an impact as say *Out Run* did in its time.

Nick Kelly

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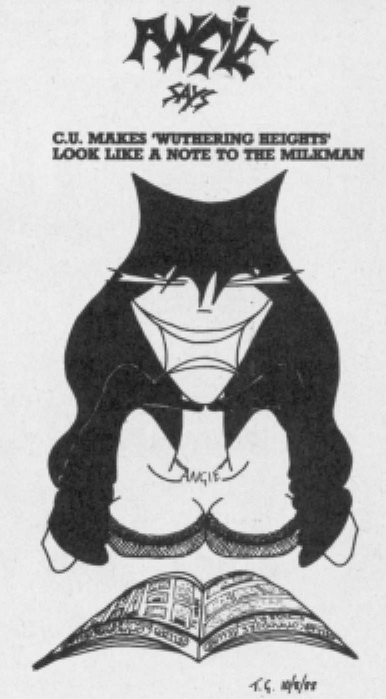
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ARCADES

CABAL

CAPCOM
2 x 10p

After Konami's rather lacklustre attempt at a straight-ahead military shoot 'em up *Devestators* (reviewed last month), I was pleasantly surprised to see this latest offering from Capcom avoiding the same mistakes.

For a start, *Cabal*'s graphics, though hardly the last word, are about fifty times clearer than those in *Devastators*. The scenes range from the outskirts of an army camp to an airbase, to a swamp, each with plenty of trees, barrels, sheds and other forms of cover, both for the enemy and your lone ranger.

The basic gameplay method isn't a million miles distant from the vertical shoot 'em up phase of *Gryzor*, with your onscreen character weaving and rolling left and right as he blasts up the screen. Control is via a rollerball and a brace of fire buttons. The rollerball controls a gunsight which is moved *Combat School* fashion onto your targets. Your onscreen character follows the horizontal movement of the gunsight, unless — and this is advisable — you keep your gun fire button pressed down continuously, in which case, the soldier stands still while you shift the gunsight from target to target. When you do find it necessary to move out of the way of the clearly visible approaching missiles and bullets, simply take your finger off fire and our hero will execute spectacular evasive action (rolling, etc.) in response to your rollerball command.

You start out life with a low-powered single shot weapon and a few grenades, but taking out various specialist soldiers along the way causes grenade and enhanced weapons icons to float down the screen to be picked up by you. Once you've got a machine gun, life becomes a lot easier. Some other troops deliver you point bonus icons instead of weaponry as they perish.

In each case, the opposition cunningly use any buildings, trees, parked vehicles or other handy pieces of cover, as indeed you should yourself. You'll have to get rid of these objects to clear the scene, but the more you blast away the more vulnerable you become yourself.

Aside from the standard foot soldiers, tanks, lorries, helicopters and armoured personnel carriers drift across the scene, requiring, naturally, several hits to destroy. And at the end of each level you'll have to fight it out with an enormous gunship, submarine, tank or other major foe before you get to move on.

Moving on, incidentally, is the name of the game. Though the game's intro is a bit thin on detail, it's clear that our hero is heading resolutely for a major showdown with person or persons unknown (or unknown to me at any rate — I didn't reach the end of the game). As each section is cleared, we are treated to a very funny, if totally unexpected sight: having fought grim-faced through the waves of enemy attackers and cleared the scene, our onscreen friend gives a whoop of joy, brandishes his rifle, tilts his body back, and hightails it zig-zagging up the screen and out of sight for all the world like a Loony Tunes' character. I almost expected the screen to flash up 'That's All Folks'.

Cabal manages to combine a fairly traditional scenario with an unusual control system successfully. It's infectious and, happily for the less fleet-of-hand, not too ten pee-consuming difficulty-wise. Check it out.

Nick Kelly

GRAPHICS:	7
SOUND:	7
TOUGHNESS:	6
ENDURANCE:	8
CONVERTABILITY:	8
OVERALL:	7



Gambolling out of sight.



Pick up machine-gun.

Clear the air-base.



ARCADES

ARCADES



A passing shot unleashed.



Preparing to serve.

CENTRE COURT

SEGA
5 x 10p

Now, not many people know this, but as a young lad I tended to spend a disproportionate amount of my time beating the cover off unfortunate tennis balls. Compared to my obsession, Mike Pattenden's interest in soccer couldn't be termed more than 'mild' and our Nige isn't much more than a casual, weekend headbanger.

Of course, the onset of maturity, the discovery of rock 'n' roll and beer, and congenital laziness eventually reduced my participation in the sport to the occasional thrashing of an editor on a Sunday morning (*Ooer — Ed*), but I nevertheless felt a quickening of the pulse when I spotted this new 'un from Sega.

For one, two or four players, *Centre Court* is a view-from-above attempt to recreate this charming sport. Control is via two joysticks, one controlling your player's movement and one the hitting of the ball. There are, realistically, four different ways to hit the ball: pushing the hitting handle upwards produces a 'flat' stroke (hard, no spin); pushing left results in a 'sliced' stroke (underspin, tends to make the ball drift out of court); pushing right produces 'topspin' (overspin, causes the ball to dip in flight), and pulling back results in a lob being thrown up.

Each game starts at the final set, love-all, and there are four difficulty levels to choose from. There are also four grand prix tournaments to win, but you'll have to have worked fairly hard to get that far, at least if you're playing against the computer in singles.

The serve is straightforward enough — simply push the hitting lever when the ball which your player has thrown up is somewhere near its zenith. The serve, incidentally, is viewed from behind, but as soon as the ball's been struck, the view switches to overhead.

The actual rallying takes a while to get the hang of. For a start, you've got to ignore conventional tennis wisdom and stand somewhere near the middle of the court if you want to have any realistic hope of success — stand six feet behind the baseline and you'll simply not be able to get up to a lot of balls in time. Further logistic problems are posed when it comes to volleying. Now, if you've always fancied yourself as a bit of a McEnroe, you'll know that the real spice of tennis involves approaching the net and hammering away winning volleys. Alas, Sega's advisors were obviously all Swedish: while ground-strokes are well catered for, net rushing doesn't seem to have been very well thought out. As soon as you venture near the net, all your opponent has to do is throw up a lob and the point's over. These on-screen players just aren't able to scurry back to the baseline quickly enough to retrieve the ball.

These quibbles aside, I can't deny that I did enjoy *Centre Court*. The graphics, though small when viewed from above, are pretty impressive, with the striking movements being reproduced excellently. And, just like the real thing, timing is everything — a slight miscalculation will find the ball being missed or hitting the player in the stomach. Who cares that the unseen umpire declares almost any winning shot an "ace"? So what if the game only lasts about half a dozen points if you're not too experienced? *Centre Court* may not be tennis, exactly, but it's good fun.

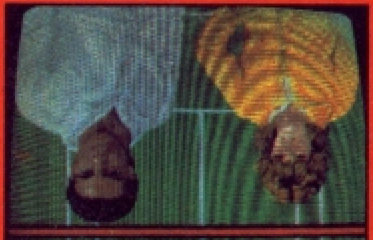
Nick Kelly

GRAPHICS:	7
SOUND:	6
TOUGHNESS:	7
ENDURANCE:	8
CONVERTABILITY:	6
OVERALL:	7

The Grand Prix Circuit.



Our four challengers.

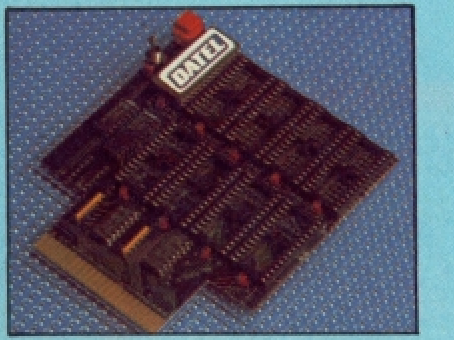


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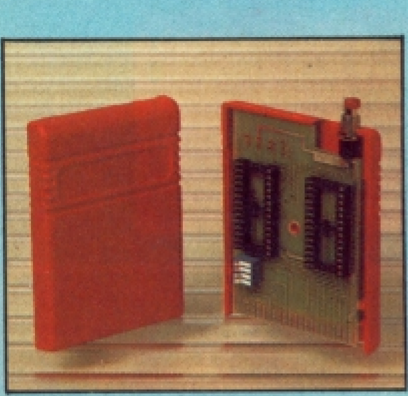




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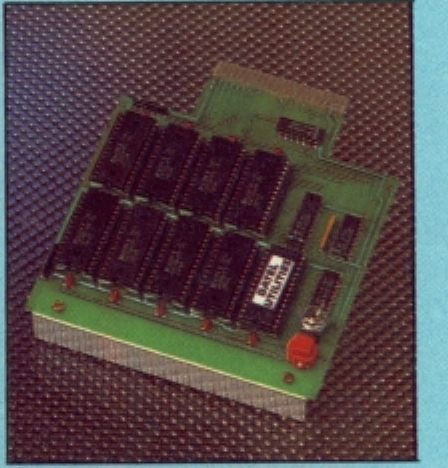
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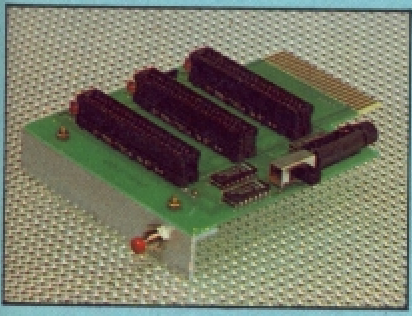
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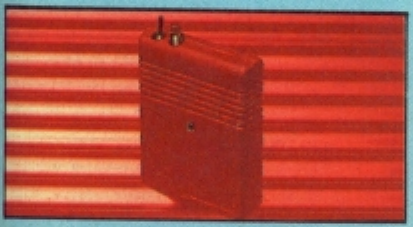
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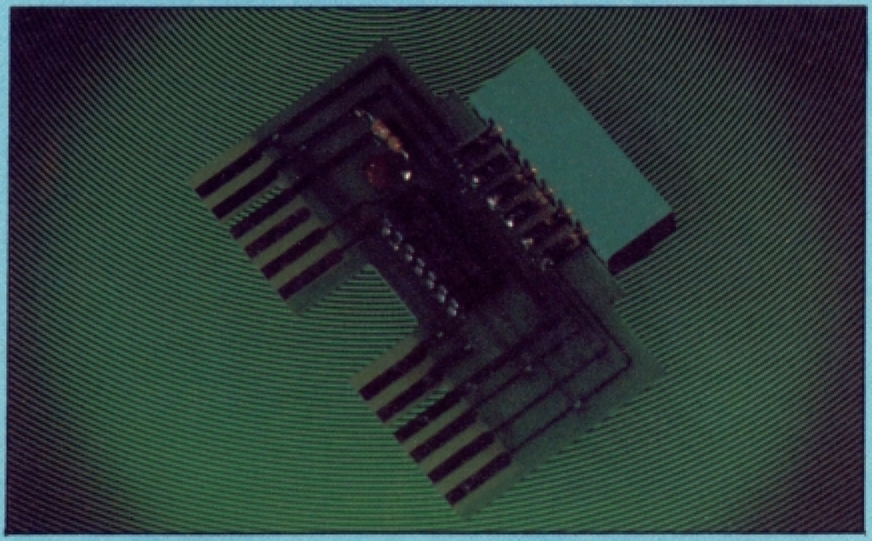
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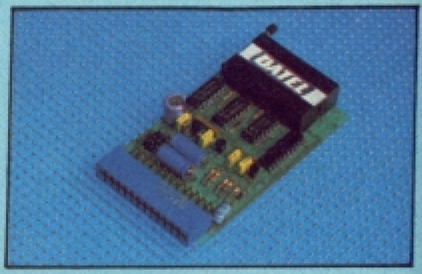
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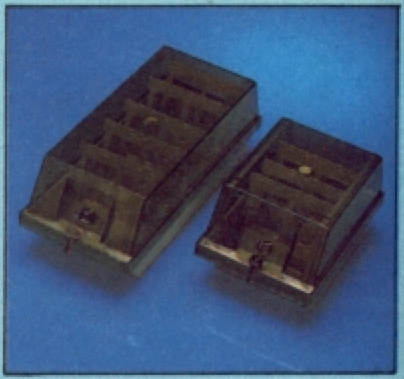
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SKY SOLDIER

SNK
3 × 10p

With so many massively innovative dedicated games appearing in the arcades of late, we've not been paying very much attention to the plethora of humble PCB games which come out each month. And, frankly, you can't really blame us — there are only so many things to write about vertically-scrolling progressive shoot 'em ups, and every month at least five new samples appear, with mildly differing graphics and sound perhaps, but identical in concept.

But we were wandering through our local pleasure dome the other day and it occurred to us that perhaps we should try our hands at one of the new upright blastabouts, just to keep our hands in, like.

SNK's Sky Soldiers was the first specimen that we encountered, a blastabout for one or two players along fairly classic lines.

Once you pump in your tens, you're given a choice of four different special weapons to accompany your standard cannon. Your aircraft, incidentally, is a pretty nondescript spaceship. Your opponents, however, are considerably more graphically interesting, as each level brings you back to a different place and time of aerial conflict, complete with the appropriate enemy fighters.

You kick off in Britain during the Second World War, with various German fighters coming to get you, initially from atop the screen, latterly from below as well. You can blast away with your ornery weapon to your heart's content, but your specially-chosen one is limited, and will run out all too quickly if you use it wastefully. Ever so often, naturally, a more durable enemy aircraft appears before you; blast this one, pick up the icon left in its wake and, presto, your firepower is increased. And at the end of each level, naturally, you encounter a huge boss in the shape of an enormous death-spitting airship of the relevant period which you'll need all your might to vanquish.

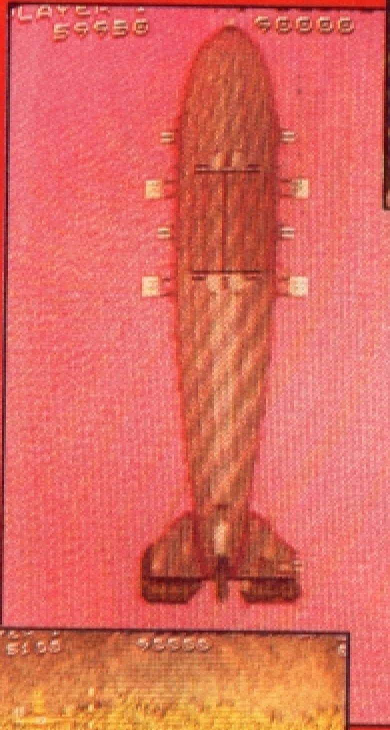
Nope, you can't deny that most of *Sky Soldier's* features have been seen elsewhere in fairly similar form, ooh, a good thousand times or more.

However that's not to say that this isn't worth a spin. The action is tough, but not frustratingly so, the playability's right up to standard and the graphics, which feature aircraft as varied as WW1 Graf Zeppelins and Leonardo da Vinci's never-built prototype flying machines are excellent. And if you're the kind of person who gets bored with being flung bodily around the arcade, or can't afford the exorbitant prices that many of these new metallic monsters demand of you just to acquire the basic gameplay training you need to be able to enjoy 'em, well *Sky Soldier* is probably as good a coin-op as any for whiling away some time and money. Rather like a cheery pub blues band, there's nothing particularly new or innovative on offer here, but what's done is done well and all but the most cynical or avant garde will get some enjoyment out of it.

Nick Kelly



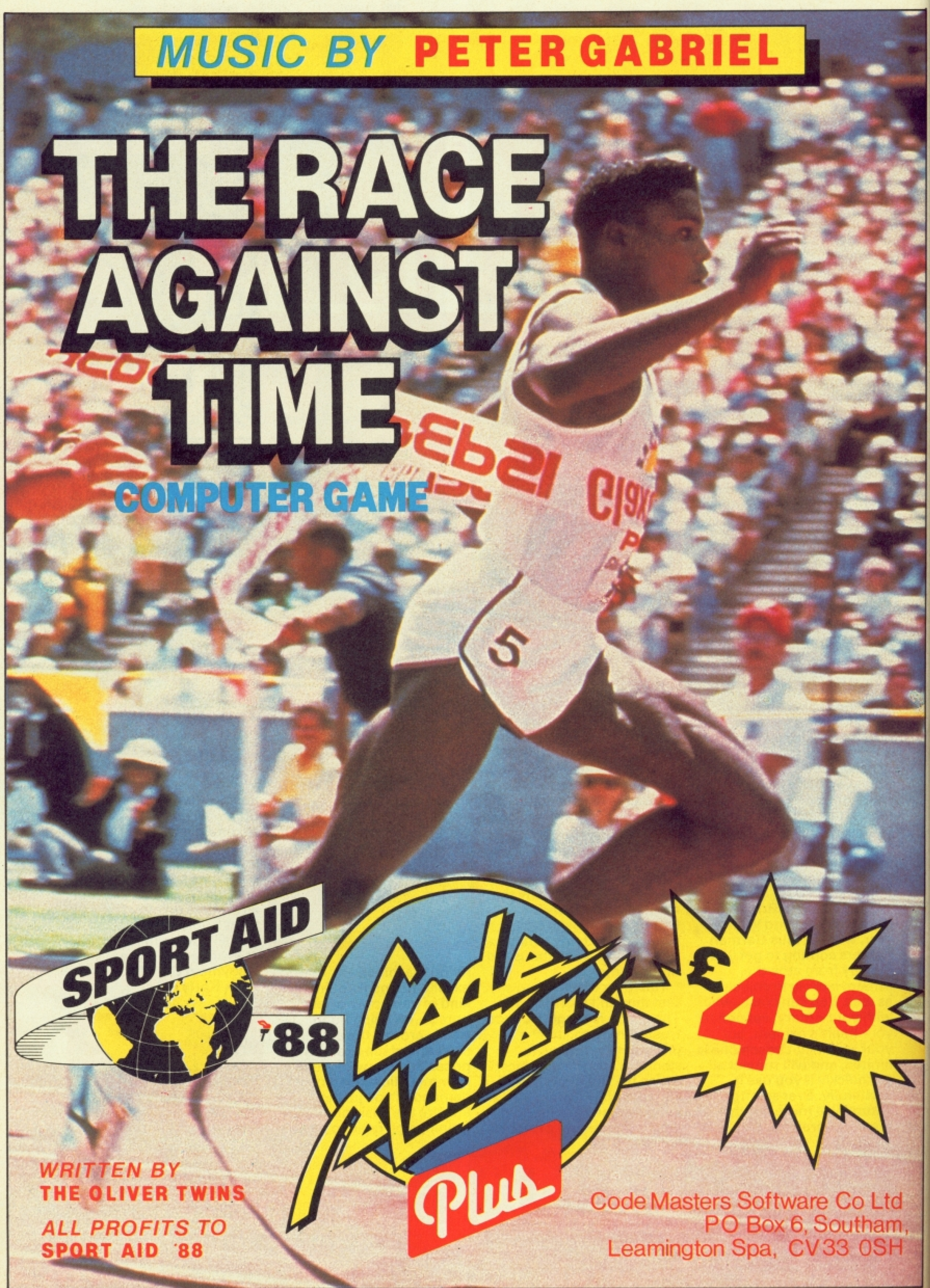
A spot of weapon shopping.


Could go down like a lead zeppelin.


Yep it's London.


Shooting small fry.

GRAPHICS	7
SOUND	6
TOUGHNESS	6
ENDURANCE	6
CONVERTABILITY	7
OVERALL	6


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NEXT MONTH

There's two very good reasons why you shouldn't miss out on next month's Commodore User.

FREE CASSETTE!

OPERATION WOLF



Next month's issue comes with a a cassette taped to the cover, and it's absolutely free! You'll be able to sample one of the hottest games due to be released this Christmas, *Operation Wolf*. That's an interactive demo too, so you'll be able to get a real taste of the action that makes this a real number one contender for Christmas!

PLUS!

A free game! On the other side of our demo cassette we've put together a complete shoot 'em up called *Exceleron*, specially written for CU, and testing enough by anyone's standards. We'd review it next issue, but it would probably get a 10 and a superstar ...

EXELERON



CU NEXT MONTH

NEW IMAGE!

Style conscious mag that we are, we thought it was about time we got it together and had a clean up. From next month the magazine is going to have more colour and it's going to look even better than it does now, with new designer pages for the reviews section, buzz and adventure. That'll make us the sharpest dressed mag in your newsagent. One slight drawback though (yeah we know, there's always a catch) the extra colour means we're going to have to go up by 10 pence to £1.20. But we're still cheaper than our rivals, and we'll always be better value for money. Get ready to be blown away on October 26th.

Tommy's Tips

Tommy goes for a real hands on experience.



Gimme five

Please could you answer some queries on my C128
1. Is there a way of resetting a game in 64 mode so I could enter pokes?
2. Is there a way of creating multi-band music, eg having a drum beat going along with a tune?
3. Is there a poke or anything that will disable run/stop?
4. Is there anyway I can get hold of a book which will explain how to create a loading screen?
5. Finally is it possible to create a program which will run when loaded without having to type run?
D. Piesse
Aberdeen

The use of a reset, or 'freeze' cartridge will work just as well on the C128 when in C64 mode as it does on a normal C64. Many of the current games can only really be reset for POKEs etc by using such a cartridge since the software houses spend a lot of time trying to stop you being able to reset the game. While the reset button can sometimes work (providing you hold down C< (the CBM key) it often means you can't get the game restarted again, which rather defeats the object of the exercise.

One of the advantages of the C128 is its ability to play multi-part music even from BASIC. Each of the three voices can be set to play different length notes, so that while Voice 1 is playing a long note, Voice 3 could be playing several shorter ones. Just try this simple example:

```
100 PLAY"V1T5O4WCWE"
200 PLAY"V3T3O3QGGGGG
GGG"
```

The T5 gives a guitar sound, while the T3 gives a drum sound. Although very short, the example shows how you can produce quite long combinations of music with harmony, drum rhythm and similar effects.

To disable RUN/STOP type the following in your programs: **POKE 808,100** this has the effect of disabling RUN/STOP and RESTORE as well as just the STOP key. (Note that this is for the C128; for the C64 mode use **POKE 809,255**).

As for books on loading screens, I haven't come across any that specifically cover this subject for the C128. What you have to learn is assembler and the principles of interrupts. One book which may help is 'CBM 128 Assembly Language Programming' by Mark Andrews, published by SAMS (ISBN 0–672–22541–7) which contains a lot of routines you can incorporate into your programs.

Finally, if you want to load a program to auto-run, save it as the first program on a new disk. When you want to run it just press SHIFT RUN/STOP. The program will load and run without you having to type anything!

Thangs for the memory

I am doing a project and I need to know what memory addresses correspond to:
Port #1
Pin 5 = POT AY
Pin 9 = POT AX
Port #2
Pin 5 = POT BY
Pin 9 = POT BX

I gather that the paddles and mouses (!) use these too. Is this true?

Also for my project I need to know more about the I/O pins on the User Port, and how to use them.

Please help me as I don't want to experiment and damage the computer.

Last of all, my keyboard has been playing up for a while and it's not the connecting matrix under the keyboard. Therefore it must be a chip. Is this a common fault? Can you help me?
J. Marshall
Southbourne
Hants.

The addresses of both the paddles for the C64 are the same for each port, one being at 54297 and other being at

54297 and other being at 54298. Which port you read is determined by the value in the 2 MSBs of addresses 56320 (bit 7 set = port B, bit 6 = port A). Certainly the last of these addresses is used by the keyboard scan routine, but not the other two. However, a mouse would almost certainly use the port registers.

If you want to use the I/O port for interaction with the outside world there are two things to do. the first is build a buffer circuit for all 8 pins so that you don't damage the computer driver chips. The pins can only supply a total of 50 mA and can be easily overloaded. A Darlington Driver chip is the best way of controlling greater power/voltage than the computer itself can handle. The second thing to do is get hold of The Programmer's Refrence Manual, which has all the necessary information on the I/O ports.

To get you going though, these are the important addresses: 56579 — Data Direction Register (DDR) for User Port; 56577 — User Port address. To set the direction of the User Port pins, you have to set the DDR correctly, each bit in the DDR corresponding to a pin on the User Port. Thus, setting the DDR to 240 would set pins C-F (0-3) as inputs and pins H-L (4-7) as outputs. On the User Port, Pin 1 is ground (Ov), pin 2a is +5v and pins 10 and 11 are the 9v ac lines. Pins C-L, underneath the connector, are the actual port pins. Pins A and N are also grounded.

Finally, it could be the keyboard decoding chip or it could be the keyboard cable connector not making proper contact. It is not a common fault and if it is the chip you may need to get the machine properly repaired.

Reading the scriptures

● I'm writing for advice concerning a word processor for use with my Commodore 64.

I have recently purchased a Star LC-10C printer to replace an MPS 801 and I'm having problems with control codes. I have the following WP's, *Easy Script, Word Perfect* and *Mini Office II*, which I'm using to type this letter.

Can you suggest a package that will allow embedded commands and on screen preview of print format? The three which I have seen advertised are *Super Script 64, First Word 64* and *Paperclip*. I don't know anything about these except that *Super Script* is an enhanced version of *Easy Script*.

Would any or all of these give me the facilities I require and if so which would you recommend? Alternatively if none of these programs are suitable could you suggest an alternative?

D. R. Miller
Swanage,
Dorset

You are suffering the age-old question that has perplexed users of word-processor programs ever since they were first invented; do you go for WYSIWYG, (what you see is what you get) or do you go for a WP program that gives you all the embedded commands you want? The main problem is that with the 64 it is almost impossible to have true WYSIWYG, since a 40 column screen is just not capable of giving you the full page in one go.

Programs like *Paperclip* do try, since this uses embedded commands, but also has a 'preview' facility where you can send the printout to the screen instead of to the printer. The disadvantage is that you only get to see the first 40 columns!! However, I once reviewed virtually every WP porgram ever written for the 64 (it was a few years ago!) and apart from those programs which used an 80-column add-on board, *Paperclip* undoubtedly had the greatest number of features. However, there is a great deal of difference between the price of *Paperclip* and *Mini Office* so it's very much a case of value for money. If you really need both preview facilities and embedded commands then *Paperclip* is probably the one to look at.

As for alternatives, after my marathon review of WP promrams for the 64, I stuck with *Vizawrite* and have used it ever since (including for 128 version). There is a cartridge version available which gives instant start-up and *Vizawrite* uses a combination of WYSIWYG and embedded commands, although the mixture is not to everyone's taste. One final point: if you want to be able to read documents prepared with your existing WP programs then you may find that compatibility becomes the limiting factor. In such an event, an upgrade like *Superscript* may make more sense.

Wizbugged

● I have the game *Wizball* on disk for my Commodore 64, but to my annoyance, I'm unable to get it to run properly. It loads fine, and I get the title page, but after pressing fire when it says "Get Ready", all I get is a blank screen. I've had the disk replaced by Ocean, but the same thing happens every time.

I've been told by top programmer Andrew Braybrook that *Wizball* uses "quazi-opcodes" that are combined machine-code commands that don't work on certain machines. But what are you supposed to do if your machine is one of those that can't handle the 'illegal' codes? Should I replace some of the chips inside my computer? All I want to do is play *Wizball*!!

Finally, which is the best disk turbo system to buy? I'm thinking of "Dolphin DOS" or "Disk Demon", but if you use one of these chip-based systems, does your disk drive have to be perfectly aligned for it to work?

Christopher Hester
Nr. Shiply
West Yorkshire

One of the problems with the current range of computer games is that everyone now expects all-singing, super-duper, knockout graphics, sound and action and sometimes the programmers have to take short-cuts to achieve all this. Where this involves using non-documented 'features' of either the hardware or the operating system and kernal calls, this works fine so long as the manufacturers don't change anything. However, it sounds very much as though this is the case here and that you probably have an older version of the 64 than the one used for development of the game. You certainly shouldn't start messing around changing chips in the computer since the changes may include modifications to the motherboard as well as changes in the op system addresses. If the game genuinely will not run on your machine then you have a legitimate complaint against the dealer from whom you purchased it and should return it. As for a disk system, I have heard excellent reports about Dolphin DOS, although it does involve a bit of fitting. As for disk head alignment, this is certainly more critical when using one of these systems, but if you use the drive a lot you should consider purchasing one of the alignment kits anyway; it saves an awful lot of heartache in the long run!

And five more

● I would be grateful if you could answer the following questions.
1. What is the best language to program games on the 64? Basic or machine code? If it is machine code could you name a utility to help me master it?
2. What language are professional games programmed in?
3. Is the TRILOGIC Expert cartridge better value than the ACTION REPLAY MK IV?
4. What is the best disk drive to buy for the 64?
5. Can you name a good art package that can draw junglescape and metallic scenery?

Colin Fulton,
Ayr
Scotland

Comparing Basic and M/code is rather like comparing a Porsche with a Mini — both get to the same place in the end, but one gets there a good deal faster! In games, speed is normally a critical factor in the interaction with the player and in this case there is no substitute for pure m/code. The disadvantage of m/code is that it is slow to write, easy to make mistakes and more difficult to learn in the first place.

The BASIC found on most micros is an 'Intepreted' language, which means that each line is actioned in turn as it is held in memory. This results in very slow execution speeds. Many languages, such as PASCAL or 'C', use a compiler, which allows the language to be reasonably easily learnt and written but which produces an intermediate type of code which is much faster than interpreted code, but slower than pure m/code. The 'Dr Watson' series has a book which teaches m/code on the 64 and this is quite good if it's still available. Alternatively, Rae West's Book 'Programming the CBM 64' has a large section on m/code and how to use it. You will also need a good monitor/assembler program to speed up writing code, a cartridge version is useful when you are learning since lots of machine crashes are inevitable. As for cartridges, it is really a question of seeing which one has the features you want. If they both do everything you want then go for the cheapest one (at the moment that's the EXPERT).

The best value for money disk drive for the 64 has to be the Excelerator from Evesham Micros; it now comes bundled with GEOS for only £129-95 incl VAT. Finally, such things as a 'metallic' look depend on your ability as as artist, not on the art package used.

Expert

● I have had my C64 for five years now. I want to buy an *Expert Switch*. I am pondering how much it will cost and where could I get it?

Thomas Maguire
Hackney
London

I assume you are talking about one of the expert cartridges that allow you to 'freeze' game action and dump graphics screens etc. The most popular ones seem to be Action Replay, Freeze Machine and one called simply the 'Expert'. These all cost around £30 or so and can be obtained respectively from DATEL, EVESHAM MICROS and TRILOGIC.

Well so much for summer, eh! There was barely enough sun to burnish the slappy pate of a CCI editor. Still TLW's eagerly waxing its skis for the Winter season. All that remains is end of year madness, the sound of cash tills ringing and a nation gorging itself on a credit boom. And it all begins at the PC Show which is happening even as we go to press. TLW will return next month fat and bloated with gossip, but until then we'd like to set a few things straight ...

● Call us pedantic if you like (*Pedantic* — Ed) but we're not great fans of the current Stalinist vogue for rewriting history. Take Capcom/US Gold's *1943 The Battle of Midway*. Sorry, excuse us but the Battle of Midway happened in June 1942. As for Gremlin's *Night Raider*. Well we don't know where to begin. According to the manual the Bismark was sunk on 26 May 1941 by a Grumman Avenger, an American torpedo bomber. Well that should come as news to the Admiralty. The Bismark was attacked by a squadron of Fairey Swordfish on the 26th which damaged the German battleship's steering gear. It was only the day after that she was sunk when engaged by a pack of British boats from which the cruiser HMS Dorsetshire fired two torpedoes which finished her off. History lesson over. Gremlin take fifty lines 'I must not falsify history for my own ends.'

"So this is the end result of a loadsamoney economy? Not bad, quite right-on actually! I think I'll cancel my subscription to Marxism Today." Next month Neil reviews policy . . .

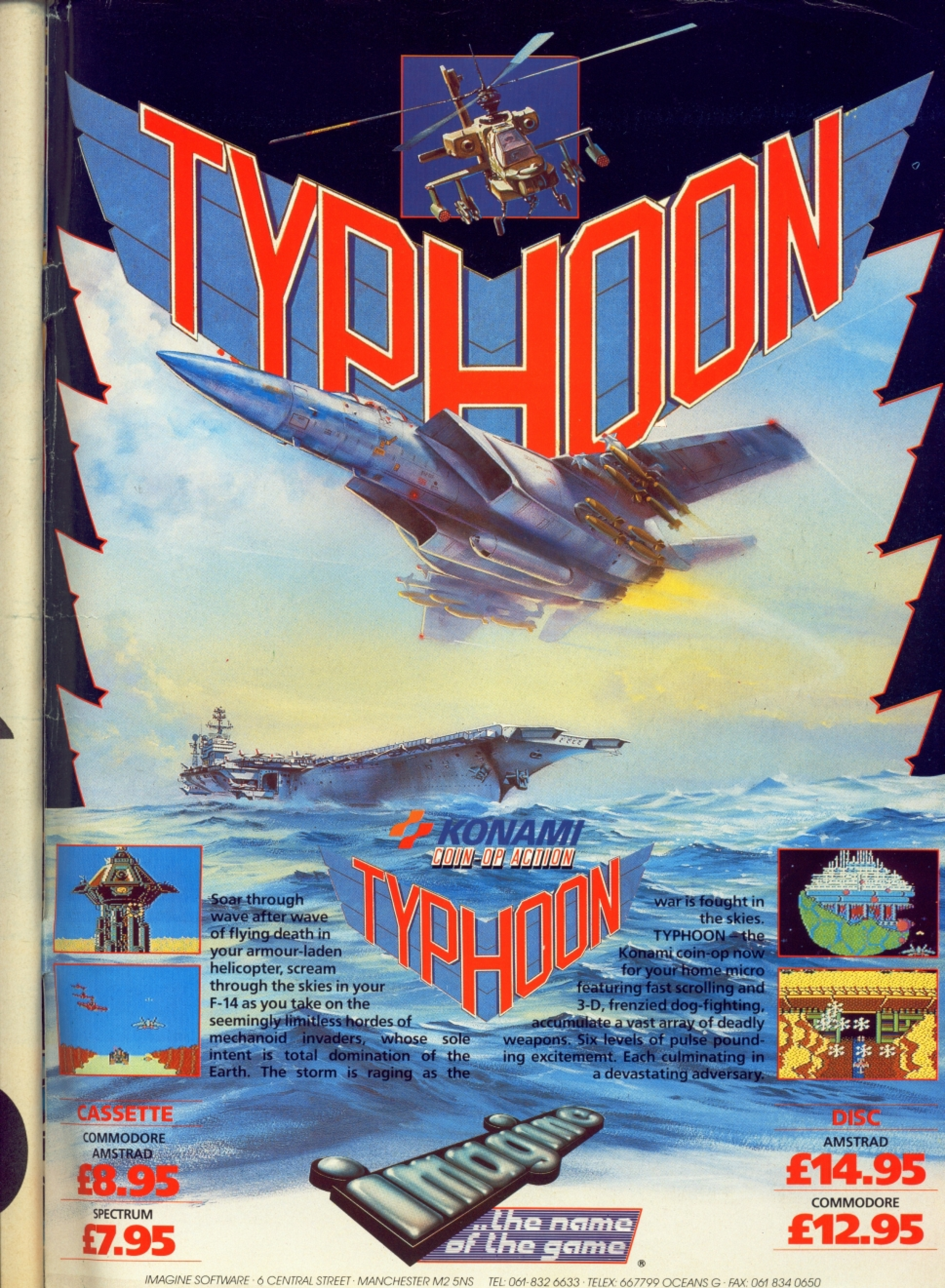


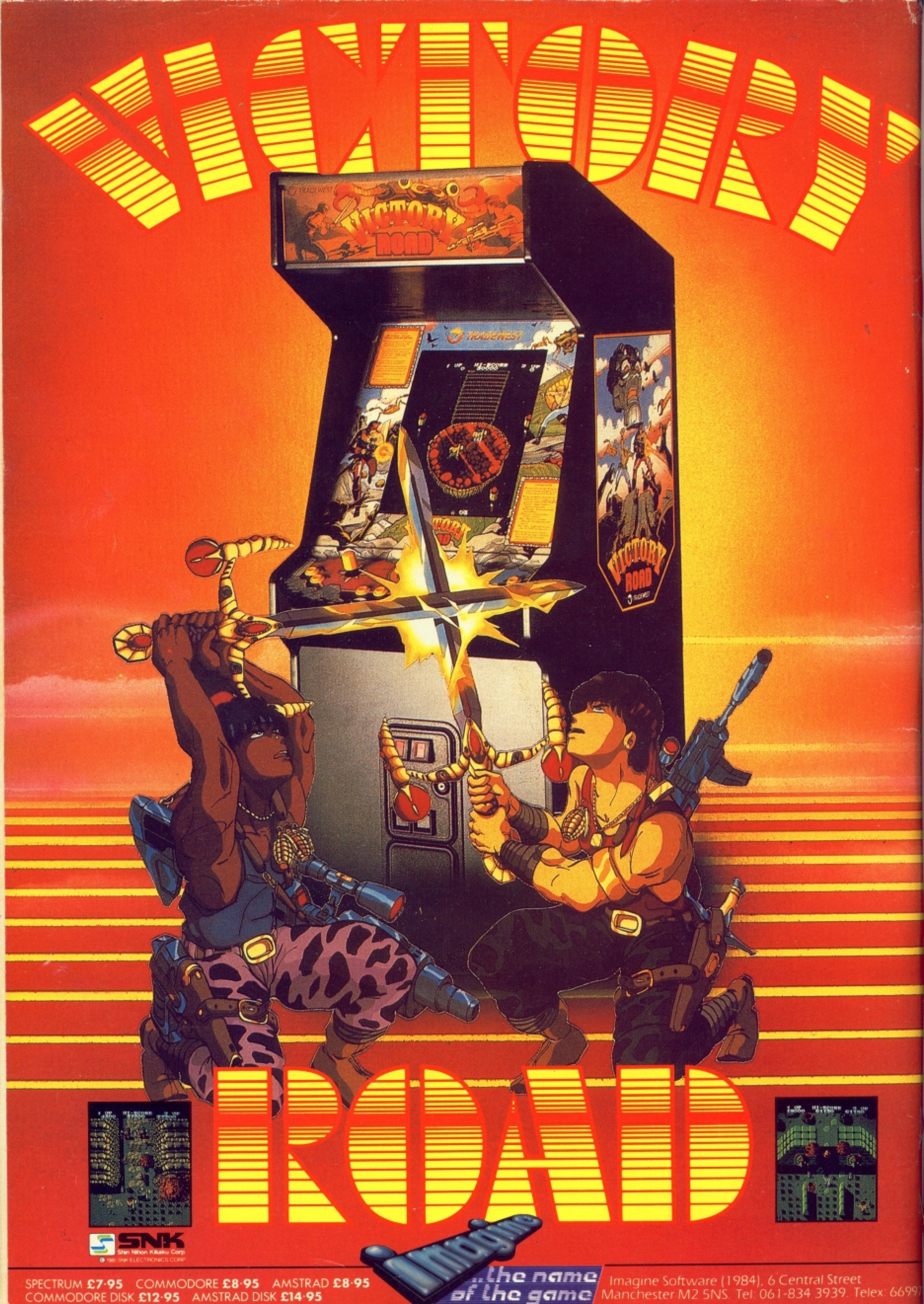
"You'll never take me alive, ya doity beagle!" Foxx ignores the firearms amnesty.



THE LAST WORD

● Meanwhile back to the present and the litigious world of software. With *Katakis* already shelved because of its, ahem, debt to *R-Type*, Mediagenic have now turned their corporate guns on *Armalyte*, claiming that the shoot 'em up also rips the Irem coin-op off. Battle has begun but no writs are known to have been exchanged yet. Which can't be said of *Great Giana Sisters II* which has been officially withdrawn. It seems the game was being exhibited at a Hanover show by naughty softco Rainbow Arts when a Nintendo official walked past. He blew his top, ordered the game to be switched off and had an injunction served within hours. Wallop!


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